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THE HOMILIST.

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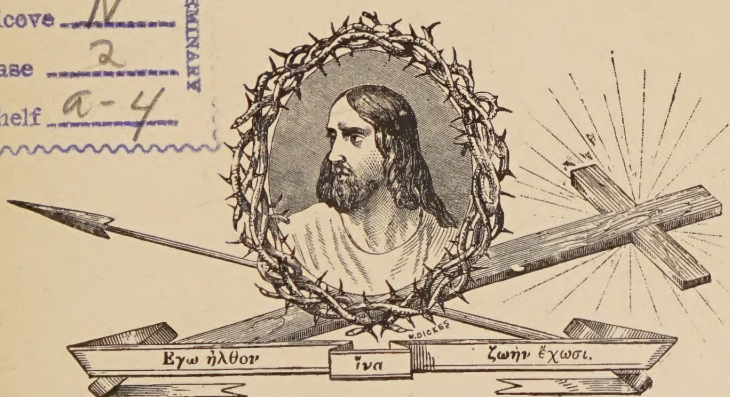
URIJAH REES THOMAS,

REDLAND PARK, BRISTOL.

VOL. VI., ECLECTIC SERIES,

VOL. LVI. FROM COMMENCEMENT.

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WILLIAM MACK, 4, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON;
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1885.

THE HISTORY OF

THE CITY OF BRISTOL

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE PRESENT

BRISTOL:
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The
Leading Homily.

THE SEVEN SEALS; OR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOOD
AND EVIL IN HUMAN HISTORY.

“AND I SAW WHEN THE LAMB OPENED ONE OF THE SEALS, AND I HEARD, AS IT WERE THE NOISE OF THUNDER, ONE OF THE FOUR BEASTS SAYING, COME AND SEE,” &c.—*Rev. vi. 1-17.*

IN the preceding chapter we have a grand dramatic illustration of God's government of this world, and four thoughts are powerfully struck on our attention in relation to this government. First: *It is conducted on a vast preconcerted plan.* Second: *This vast plan is sealed in mystery.* Third: *The mystery of this vast plan is to be expounded by Christ.* Fourth: *Christ as the Expounder of this vast plan is the Object of immense interest to the universe.**

In this chapter we have the breaking open of six of the seals of that mystic roll containing the Divine plan of the government of the world, and as held in the hands of Christ who is the Great Expounder. The opening of these seals suggests to our notice and presses on our attention *the constant development of good and evil in human history.* Notice—

I.—The development of GOOD in human history. By

* For particular remarks on this point see *Homilist*, Volume II., Pages 39 and 119.

the good I mean the true, the beautiful, and the right. Good and evil are here working among the moral tenants of this planet; perhaps it is not so in other planets. In heaven there is good and good only; in hell evil, and, perhaps, evil only; but on the earth the two are at work simultaneously, constantly, and everywhere. Taking the conquering hero as going forth on the "white horse" as an illustration of the right and the good on this earth it is suggested—

First: That the good is embodied in a personal life—"Behold a white horse, and He that sat on him" (thereon). The right in this world is not a mere abstraction, it is embodied in human life. In Christ this was so in perfect kind and degree. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He was the Right—incarnate, breathing, living, acting; and this, not only during His corporeal life here, but in all His disciples through all times. He is in them; He is the conquering Hero destroying the works of the devil.

Secondly: That the good embodied in a personal life is aggressive in its action. "And He went (came) forth conquering and to conquer." Right is an invading force, it is ever making aggressions on the wrong. This is according to its very essence. Wherever the sunbeams break darkness departs; so with the right, it is always conquering. Wonderful are the conquests it has achieved in past ages, and its victories are still proceeding and will proceed until it becomes the Might of the world. This right is not something elsewhere, it is here; not something that has been, but something that is and shall be. The supreme King of Righteousness is constantly proceeding on His triumphant march, and one day "Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess." In its aggressiveness it moves (1) Righteously,—"*A white horse.*" The horse is the instrument which the Right employs to bear it on to victory. The good is not only pure in its nature and aims, but pure in its methods. In its aggressiveness it moves (2) Triumphantly,—"*He that sat on him (thereon) had a bow.*" The bow carries the arrow, and the arrow penetrates the foe. Truth wins its victories by the arrows of conviction. In its aggressiveness it moves (3) Royally,—"*There was given unto him*

a crown." Right is royal, the only royal thing in the universe, and the more perfectly it is embodied the more brilliant the diadem. Hence Christ is crowned with glory and honour. He is "exalted above all principalities and powers," &c. Kind heaven, quicken the speed of this "white horse;" and may the victories of its triumphant Rider multiply every hour; and soon may "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God!" &c.

II.—The development of EVIL in human history. I take the passage as giving illustrations of five great evils at work in human life,—

First: War. "*And there went out another horse that was red.*" "And another horse came forth, a red horse;" *and power was given to him that sat thereon* (and it was given to him) *to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill* (slay) *one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*"

Mutual murder, man destroying his brother. This evil refers to no particular period or place, it has been going on from the days of Cain and Abel through all times even unto this hour. The spirit of murder burns throughout the race. The "*red horse*" is ever on the gallop. His ruthless tramp echoes through all souls and communities. Whence come wars? "Come they not from your lusts?" &c. Alas, that there should be found in a country calling itself Christian, a government that should be feeding and fattening this "*red horse*" of rapine and bloodshed. Aye, and, alas, feeding and fattening it from the resources of an over-taxed and starving population. Another great evil which is illustrated is—

Secondly: Indigence. "*I beheld, and lo* (I saw, and behold) *a black horse: and he that sat on him* (thereon) *had a pair of balances* (a balance) *in his hand. And I heard* (as it were) *a voice in the midst of the four beasts* (living creatures) *say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.*" "Whilst making food scarce, do not make it so that a choenix (a day's provision of wheat, variously estimated at two or three pints) shall not be got for a penny. Famine generally follows the sword. Ordinarily from sixteen to twenty measures

were given for a denarius.”—*Fausset*. The state of want here described, which means no more than that the whole of a man’s labour is exhausted in the purchase of the bread required for one day; and this certainly does not amount to that indigence which prevails amongst thousands of our countrymen who are starving for bread where wealth and luxury abound. This evil, then, like the others, is not confined to any age or clime, but is here and everywhere. Let every man, and especially every preacher in our land, study Mr. George’s work on *Progress and Poverty*, in order to trace this national indigence to its true source. Another great evil here illustrated is—

Thirdly: Mortality. “*Behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell (Hades) followed with him. And power was given (there was given authority) unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill (slay) with sword, and with hunger (famine), and with death, and with the beasts (wild beasts) of the earth.*” “The colour pallid or livid,” says *Bishop Carpenter*, “is that deadly greenish hue which is the unmistakeable token of the approach of death. The rider is Death, not a particular form of death, but Death himself. Attending him, ready to gather up the slain, is Hades. The fourth seal is the darkest and most terrible. Single forms of death (war and famine) were revealed in the earlier seals; now that the Great King of Terrors himself appears, and in his hand are gathered all forms of death—war, plague, famines, pestilence. For the second time the word death is used it must be taken in a subordinate sense, as a particular form of death, such as plague or pestilence.”

This Mortality is, then, another evil confined to no period or place. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to this hour. Men are dying everywhere—all are dying. With every breath I draw some one falls. Another evil is—

Fourthly: Martyrdom. “*I saw under (underneath) the altar the souls of them that were (had been) slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud (great) voice, saying, How long, O Lord (Master, the), holy*

and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood." Who is the martyr? The words suggest (1) He is one who dies for the truth. "*Slain for the word of God.*" He is not one who has merely been murdered, or one who has been murdered on account of his own convictions, but one who has been put to death for holding *right* convictions—belief in the word of God. Such a belief which they attested by ample testimony. The words suggest (2) He is one who in heaven remembers the injustice of his persecutors,—"*How long, O Lord!*" The Almighty is represented as saying to Cain—"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me." As if the earth itself was craving for justice, and groaned for retribution of wrong. The cry of the martyr in heaven is not for vengeance, for all heaven is full of love; but the cry is rather for information when justice will be done,—"*How long?*" As if they said, "We know that Thou wilt judge and avenge our blood sooner or later,—but how long? The truly good in all ages have an unbounded confidence in the rectitude of the Divine procedure. "I know," said Job, "that my Vindicator liveth." Justice will come sooner or later. (3) He is one who in the heavenly world is more than compensated for all the wrongs received on earth. "*And white robes were given unto every one of them*" (and there was given them to each one a white robe). They have white raiment in heaven,—the emblem of purity. They have repose in heaven,—"*rest for a little while.*" They have social hopes in heaven,—"*until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.*" Another evil is—

Fifthly: Physical Convulsion. "*And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;*" &c. Observe (1) Our earth is constantly subject to great physical convulsions. Geology reveals some of the tremendous revolutions that have been going on from the earliest dawns of its history; and such changes are constantly occurring. Volcanoes, earthquakes, deluges, tornados, seas overflowing their boundaries and engulfing whole continents, &c. Perhaps no generation of men have lived who have not witnessed some of

the phenomena here described,—“the great earthquake, the sun becoming black as sackcloth, the moon as blood, mountains and islands removed,” &c., &c. (2) Great physical convulsions are always terribly alarming to ungodly men. “*The kings of the earth, and the great men (princes), and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men (the rich), and every bond-man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens (caves) and in the rocks of the mountains. And said (they say) to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His (their) wrath is come; and who shall be (is) able to stand?*” Fear is an instinct of wickedness; terror is the child of wrong. “The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth.”

“Oh, it is monstrous, monstrous !

Methought the billow spoke and told me of it ;

The wind did sing it to me ; and the thunder,

That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced

The name of Prospero : it did pass my trespass.”—*Shakespeare.*

(3) The alarm of ungodly men is heightened by a dread of God. “*For the great day of His (their) wrath is come: and who shall be (is) able to stand?*” Dread of God is the soul of all fear. “I heard Thy Voice in the garden, and I was afraid.” How unnatural is this dread of God; the dread of One who is at once the Essence and the Fountain of all good. “*Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.*” The “*wrath of the Lamb*”! This is a monstrous phenomenon. Who has ever seen a lamb in a rage, meekness aflame with indignation? A more terrific idea I cannot get. “*The wrath of the Lamb.*” It is an ocean of oil in flames.

CONCLUSION.—In these “*seals*,” then, we have human history. We need not puzzle ourselves about the meaning of the utterances in this chapter or search for some mystic meaning. It is full of current events occurring in all times and lands, and we are here commanded to study them. At each event some living creature, some Divine messenger in the spiritual empire, says,—“*Come and*

see." "Come and see" the triumphant Hero of the good going forth on the *white* horse conquering and to conquer; mark the aspect, the movements and the progress of good in the world in which you live, take heart and speed it on. "Come and see" the *red* horse, the spirit of murder and bloodshed, that is creating discords and fightings everywhere, rifling families and communities of all concord, filling the air with the cries of the dying and the wails of the widow and the orphan. Come and study the demon of war; study it in order to destroy it. "Come and see" the *black* horse trampling in the dust the food which heaven has provided, and which man requires, thus leaving millions to starve. Study this national poverty until you realize the true causes and apply the true cure. "Come and see" the *pale* horse hurrying through the world, visiting in his turn every individual, family, community, nation, trampling under foot all men, regardless of character, age, position, nation. Study death, its moral causes, its final issues. "Come and see" "*the souls of those who were slain for the word of God.*" Study martyrdom, despise the persecutors, and honour their victims. "Come and see" the great physical convulsions of nature. Study the physical phenomena of the world, and cultivate that love for the God in all, Who is over all, and that confidence in His love, wisdom, and power, which will enable you to be calm and triumphant in the most terrible physical convulsions, enabling you to sing—

"God is our Refuge and Strength,
A present help in trouble;
Therefore will we not fear,
Though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried
Into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

Brothers, who shall tell the seals that will be broken open in our book of destiny during the new year which we are now entering? Ere we commenced our existence all pertaining to our life through all the ages we have to run was mapped out and

registered, even in minutest detail, in the Divine roll of destiny. All the events of our lives are but the breaking of the seals of that book. With every fresh event, every new effort, some fresh seal is broken. What seals are yet to be broken, what Divine archetypes are yet to be embodied, what latent forces are yet to be developed ! What these ears have yet to hear, these eyes have yet to see, this mind yet to conceive, this heart yet to experience. "Go thou thy way until the end be, and thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of days."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.



"Let the name of Christ who taught the world the riches of God's love in the best and most impressive manner possible, not merely by loving Him during His lifetime, but by exhibiting the grandest love of His Father by offering His life—let His name be heard by all Christian men and women with warm feelings of love ; and as He loved His Father with His whole heart and mind and soul and strength, let us also try to imitate Him and render our whole lives unto the Lord. Let not a single department in our life be estranged from God. Let us feel that the spirit of our life is in unison with the Spirit of God—that what He wishes, we wish too ; what He asks of us, that we give Him ; whatever He loves, that we love too. Feel your Father."—

KESHAB CHANDRA SEN.

Germ of Thought.

Two Aspects of a Godly Life.

“THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAHAM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, I AM THE ALMIGHTY GOD; WALK BEFORE ME, AND BE THOU UPRIGHT.”—*Genesis* xvii. 1.

THESE words were addressed to Abraham at the time when God gave him the promise,—“Thy name shall be no more Abram, but Abraham; a father of nations have I made thee, and kings shall come out of thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” They constitute in fact the twofold injunction with which the great promise is coupled. This injunction, or, as we might say, this call, and this promise, taken together, make up the basis of all Jewish history and all Old Testament doctrine. And here we see written, so to speak, over the cradle of Jewish life, as the first of all moral and religious lessons,—“Walk before Me, and be thou upright.”

It may help to impress on our minds the full meaning of this text, if we remember that there is a slight variation in its language as it appears in our English Bible. Instead of the word “upright,” our English version reads “be thou perfect,” but with the words sincere or upright in the margin. So understood, we may say that this text sets before us the Old Testament conception of a perfect character, namely that it is the character of the sincere, steadfast, trustworthy, and upright man. For those who may care to consider this point a little further, and to reflect how it pervades all the thought of the Old Testament, I may add that the very word FAITH, which in its new signification in Christ is the basis of St. Paul’s doctrine of the Christian life, in the Old Testament means faithfulness or steadfastness. Thus in the famous passage of the prophet Habakkuk, which St. Paul makes the text of his epistle to the Romans, the prophet said,

“Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his *faith*”; that is to say the just shall live by his fidelity or steadfastness.

Here then we may contemplate the cardinal gifts of the perfect man of the Old Testament Scriptures.

On the religious side his life was a life spent in the daily consciousness that God was at his right hand, to lead and to guide and to watch over him, and, if need be, to punish him. We all remember that Psalm, the 139th, which sets forth in its most sublime expression this consciousness of the devout Jew, and which has been called the crown of all the Psalms. “O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassedst my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon me. . . . Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee.” Here we have the answer of a devout soul to the divine injunction, “Walk before Me.”

If we turn from the religious to *the moral life*, we find this primal injunction, “be thou upright,” impressed on the language and thought and character of the Old Testament no less distinctly. “Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle?” says David, “who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.” In other words, the typically good man is the man whose life is stamped with these characteristics of habitual sincerity, uprightness, and steadfastness.

And of all the inheritances which we have derived from the far off past, there is none which has done more for common life and the standards of human intercourse than this model of right conduct and character which lives for us in the language of Psalmists and Prophets, and breathes its strong influences into our wavering hearts. Do we need to be reminded how deeply and directly Christian life is impressed with the mark of this Old Testament ideal? We have only to look for a moment at our own English Church. From the time of the Reformation onwards a great portion of our Church has always been specially distinguished by qualities which are largely due to this Old Testament influence. From the beginning of that struggle in which our ancestors threw off the yoke of the Roman hierarchy, and the printed Bible became a household possession, that type of character, which is the embodiment of this injunction, "Walk before Me, and be thou upright," has been the practical ideal of a whole section of English Christians. It has always been their special pride to be, in the fullest sense, Biblical Christians. The Bible has been their rule of daily life, its modes of thought have been their modes of thought, its language has been their language to an extent which has had the effect of marking all their life with a peculiar mark. Their reading and their interpretation of it may have been tinged by the theology of Augustine or Calvin, but the Bible itself has been the source of all their doctrine, so far as their conscious efforts were concerned. And not only so, but there have been times when the Old Testament made at least as strong a mark upon them as the New.

We hardly need to be shown how this stands out in some of the most eventful chapters of English history, or how it runs through whole sections of English life. But I doubt whether at the present time we sufficiently appreciate the debt we owe to it, or remember how much of what is strongest and most robust in our national character and in our religious life has been preserved and fostered and strengthened by it. The direct result of this constant reading of the whole Bible, Old Testament and New Testament alike, as a rule of life, has been to maintain and perpetuate amongst us a type of Christian character which may

fairly be described as, in a peculiar and pre-eminent degree, strong and sober and courageous; as free from guile or subtlety, straightforward, upright, devoted to duty. I may speak of this with the more emphasis, because the younger generation amongst us show signs of letting go their hold upon it, and there is some risk of our religion losing something of its sobriety and of its strong and healthy fibre. We live in a restless and feverish time, a time of much ferment and of fascinating materialism; and out of the time, or as if in answer to its cravings, there has sprung up a curious mixture of the nineteenth century and the sentimental side of the middle ages. It overflows our life in a strong tide of emotional, sensational, revivalist religion. It fosters a type of character which has much that is attractive in it, but some elements of danger. It is eager, devoted, enthusiastic; but mystical, exaggerative, restless. Altogether our time is scarcely healthy in this respect. The symptoms of our religious life are too hectic and feverish, and it depends for its momentum too much upon emotional excitement. It is apt to stir the feelings, and fascinate the imagination, and rouse men and women to fervour, without leaving any corresponding impress on their life and character. Seeing this, and feeling their faith in the unseen slipping away from them, some men have begun, strangely enough, to think that religion, like art, is little more than an affair of emotions and sentiments. They do not seem to understand that no religion has any genuine or lasting worth in it which does not bring the craving soul to the truth that satisfies its longings; and that a religion which does not purify the heart and produce in us a sober, God-fearing earnestness and a persistent striving after a holy life, is apt to be little more than an unsubstantial shadow usurping a sacred name.

In contrast with all this many-sided stir and ferment of passing changes in our newer religious life, whatever else we may feel about the time-honoured simplicity of the elder Evangelicalism, we shall, at any rate, feel this, that it has nursed and preserved and handed on from generation to generation some of the best qualities and characteristics of the Christian Englishman, the characteristics of the faithful, undoubting, God-

fearing, self-respecting man, who, believing with a direct, simple, and unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, through all the affairs of life, hears always the voice of God rising above every other voice, calling unto him day and night and taking no refusal, "walk before Me and be thou upright."

These considerations may not unnaturally set your thoughts travelling to the famous Englisman, who through all the long months has been so heroically defending Khartoum; for in him we see embodied and exemplified the living force of that divine injunction when men accept it and obey it with all their hearts, "Walk before Me and be thou upright."

Still more to-day, in this Church,* such a text as this turns our thoughts to him whom we laid in his grave hard by on Tuesday last. As men stood around that grave of a man, taken to his rest full of years, leaving a record of good works bravely done, universally respected, highly honoured, sincerely mourned, it was with one thought pervading all alike—"We have never known a more dutiful, a more sincere, a more courageous and upright Christian man."

Such lives and examples are given unto us and remain as ever fresh voices that bid us also endeavour to be "strong in the Lord." It is through them that we learn how great and good a thing it is to obey the call with which God summons us to a faithful life—"Walk before Me, and be thou upright."

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* Preached in Bristol Cathedral on the Sunday morning after the funeral of the Rev. Canon Girdlestone.

Latent Spiritual Power.

“WHEREFORE I PUT THEE IN REMEMBRANCE THAT THOU STIR UP THE GIFT OF GOD, WHICH IS IN THEE BY THE PUTTING ON OF MY HANDS.”—2 *Timothy* i. 6.

THE fatherly solicitudes of the apostle Paul for his son in the faith were directed to three chief objects; first, that Timothy should keep uncorrupted and undiminished the great trust of the faith committed to him; second, that he should use to its fullest extent the spiritual gift which he possessed; and third, that by the faithful discharge of his ministry he should win the crown of life eternal. Never was the desire of a great and loving heart expressed in words more tender and urgent than those which he employed in pressing upon Timothy these things.—“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith.” “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good profession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” And then concerning the use of his spiritual power, the endowment he had received for the right and effectual discharge of his ministerial functions, he said, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” “I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”

Some preliminary thoughts demand attention before we con-

sider the principal subject suggested by the text. First, it may appear to some that whatever be the lessons deducible from such a text, they are lessons only for ministers, and not for Christians generally; but such is not the case; and even if it were, I am not sure whether congregations would not often be quickened in sympathy with their ministers and become more helpful to them if the ministers now and again preached on their own responsibilities and duties and temptations, as well as on those of their people. There is something of the best influence experienced when you see any man honestly facing his work, especially if it be such work as a minister's, and then patiently striving to fulfil it. The flock will not be less but more teachable for hearing now and again how solemn a charge they are to their under-shepherd. His duty to them may be more easily and efficiently discharged if they are reminded now and again of what it is, reminded in the solemn words of Scripture. Ministerial service and ministerial responsibility and ministerial authority ought not to be kept exclusively for discussion at ordinations, County Union meetings,* and such-like gatherings. The pastoral epistles lie open in the canon of Scriptures for all readers; and that church member who reads them the most will, I cannot help thinking, be the warmest and most sympathetic helper of his pastor; for as he ponders the searching injunctions, and weights the heavy burdens of those letters, he cannot but say, "Who is sufficient for these things? God help and sustain my minister."

Then again, some may see a difficulty in the text because it speaks of the communication of a spiritual gift by the laying on of the hands of the apostle or the hands of the presbytery. This might seem to be such a limitation of the text to Timothy alone, or at least to such as have had like consecration with a like result, as quite removes it from the sphere of general Christian teaching. But here again I hold by the text as one for general use and application. And the wisdom of doing so will, I trust, appear as we advance into the theme which it opens, which is that of LATENT SPIRITUAL POWER.

* Preached before the Annual Assembly of the East Devon Congregational Union.

"I put thee in remembrance that thou stir into flame the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands." What is the gift of God? It is the Holy Spirit. But is there no gift of the Spirit before ordination to ministerial service? and is there no gift for anything but ministerial service? Are we to understand that the Holy Ghost only comes to the soul of man in connection with some special church ceremony, and only for this form of church work? If so, then indeed we have a priestly class separated from their brethren as widely as ever high priest was separated from the people. We have a body of men enjoying for their work the aid of a power which mothers may not expect to have to guide, strengthen, and bless them when they teach their children the deep things of God; nor visitors of the depraved and fallen when they strive to turn them from the error of their way; nor any man when he attempts work for Christ. Let whoever will believe such a doctrine, it will not find favour with Protestant Nonconformists. They would feel instinctively that there was something wrong about it, notwithstanding Paul's words about the gift having come to Timothy through the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

The matter is not, perhaps, so difficult of elucidation as we might suppose. Let us begin with the seed of the gift. I take it, we all admit, that there is some light of the Spirit of God shining in every mind, some influence of the Spirit of God moving on every heart. Our only hope that anyone will be led to repentance and faith is grounded upon the belief that he is not given up by God, that an inner voice warns, rebukes, pleads, exhorts, that an inner power strives with his self-will, his hardness, and his unbelief. The Spirit of God is with him, and yet not with him; with him, but not in him as a welcome guest, not in him as a Comforter and Friend; at the door as an alarming Reprover, not in him as a calming and soothing Presence. He has the gift of God, but is rejecting it. He has God for him, but is withstanding Him. Thus far for awhile.

But a change comes. He submits to this inner power, he yields to God; and lo! all his nature is suffused with sacred influence. The holy waters of love which surged and beat at the door of his

heart, now that he has opened to them, quietly move through his whole being, bearing life and blessedness with them. He is conscious, too, of power for good. Through receiving he has obtained power for giving. There was more in the gift of God which he for awhile cast from him than he had ever imagined. There was the gift of compassion, of love, of patience, of power, of a sound mind, of knowledge, of faith. Yet all these are more latent than manifest. They are gifts that may be allowed to slumber and die out in darkness and cold; or they may be stirred into a clear, bright flame.

What is the course of the development of this spiritual gift, or, better, this gift of the Spirit? What is the manifestation and unfolding of this new energy of God in the highest branch of man's nature? It is quiet and gentle as all God's operations are in the hearts that yield to Him; only an earthquake does it become when opposed by rocky natures, a desolating whirlwind among the stubborn oaks and cedars. It unfolds in willing hearts as seed in congenial soil, always with a promise of more and more; the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear; the full corn in the ear multiplied thirty, sixty, an hundredfold, and each corn the promise and potency by a similar method of a hundred more. See how it increases. A young convert begins in an unobtrusive way to speak to a few wild boys whom he gathers together, one and another of whom become Christians; the number grows, and with growth of responsibility the convert receives increase of power. The class becomes a congregation; the few trembling, kind words he managed to speak at first become the powerful address; the boys are joined by men and women; the address becomes a sermon. Many a mighty preacher of Christ has begun and developed in some such order as that. Nor have I much faith in the preachers whose Christian services never begin until the college has been entered, and something of a formal connexion has been established with recognised and stereotyped methods of work. The informal seems naturally to go before the formal; the irregular before the regular; the manifestly spontaneous before the measured and regulated effort.

That may be one way in which the gift of God may be de-

veloped and displayed. It is only one. For I hold the gift of the Spirit, which comes at conversion, to be also a gift for service. It is the same grace working through us to produce in other hearts precisely the fruits He has produced in us,—repentance through our repentance, faith through our faith, love through our love, hope through our hope. The regenerated soul brings forth graces after their kind, just as the earth grass, and herb, and tree, yielding fruit whose seed is in itself, after its kind. And, therefore, I claim that a mother can rely upon the gift of God, His good Spirit within her, to aid her in teaching and training her children quite as much as any minister, though an apostle had ordained him. “In Christ ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” Our love is love in the Spirit; our praying is praying in the Spirit; the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us; hence the form of the exhortation not to grieve and not to quench the Spirit, but so far from quenching Him, to stir Him into flame.

To Christian fathers and mothers, therefore, to Sunday school teachers, to visitors of the sick, to friends of the outcast, aye, to all who are followers of our Lord and have received His Spirit, the exhortation applies, quite as much as to ministers—“Stir into flame the gift that is in you.” Develope your latent power; let your spiritual heart become a flame, not lie a smouldering, smoke-producing energy; use what you have, trust it, make the most of it; you have the wealth of God in you.

The blessing of the Spirit is spoken of in the New Testament in much the same manner as our Lord was wont to speak of entering into the kingdom of heaven, and to observe this manner is to find the key to a difficulty. Our Lord did not employ the term, entering into the kingdom of heaven, as descriptive only of that first act of faith and submission by which we pass through its outer gates. He used it also to denote all those after stages of Christian development by which we proceed farther and farther into its mysteries and glories. It is an endless entering. And so of the gift of the Spirit. You read in the Acts of the Apostles that some who were believers had not received the

Spirit; and yet of others, that the Spirit fell on them; but all is simple enough if you remember that one reception of His grace by no means excluded another and a larger. Some were baptized into the baptism of John; but what knew they of the grander baptism which was associated with faith in the crucified and risen Saviour? Nothing. The apostles knew something of a holy presence overshadowing and helping them, while as yet Jesus was with them; but they were strangers to the mighty rushing wind, the tongues like as of fire, the enduement of power which came at Pentecost. Nor was that visitation once and over; again and again was the place where they were assembled shaken, and their souls filled with the Holy Ghost. Thus we may have received the Holy Ghost, and yet may be evermore receiving Him.

But if all require His presence and help, none so manifestly require them as the minister who has to feed the flock of God which He has purchased with His own blood; the preacher who has to preach words which are a savour of life unto life or of death unto death; the spiritual ruler of men in spiritual things, who has to warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, and be patient toward all men; who has to charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches; who has to do none of his work by partiality. His nature ought to lie open to divine influence at every point, and every call of his ministry should be a call to try and prove what the Spirit of Christ which is in him can accomplish for him and through him.

He sometimes finds out the vastness of his supernatural resources through being made painfully conscious of the inadequacy of his natural powers for the work to be done. He sees the truth dimly, and therefore seeks for the light of the Spirit to be shed upon it and irradiate it. He feels the power of the world to come feebly and superficially, and therefore cries to God to quicken his soul by the breath of the Spirit, giving it depth and intensity. He is conscious of want of sympathy with the struggling, tempted, downcast souls to whom he has to preach, and dare not appear before them in that condition lest he should

be like one mocking them, and they should return to their homes more disheartened than they left them, and therefore he entreats God to open in his heart the deep springs of divine compassion, and pour their living waters through his lips. These periods of dryness, of barrenness, of emptiness, of self-humiliation—trying to bear though they be—are always precursors of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. “I will therefore glory in mine infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon me; for when I am weak then am I strong.” When the preacher feels that the gifts of reason, of imagination, of fancy, of excellency of speech are each and all inadequate to the great work he has to do, then it is he seeks out the worth of the greatest of all gifts—the Spirit of God within him.

Nor can I see any difference between his appeal for God to work mightily within him and the yearning prayer of a mother who, before speaking to a child some truth she is most anxious he should receive, asks God to open his heart and make him willing in the day of His power, asks also for the right word and power to speak it rightly. In both instances they stir up the gift of God which is in them.

And here I would say that I am free to admit, as has been always held by those who intelligently believe that the God who created our natural powers is the same as He who sanctifies them and works through them, “that the greater the gifts by nature and cultivation, the greater the number of points at which the Holy Spirit may move us, and that Divine power is conditioned by human receptivity.” The gift of the Spirit to Timothy was the same as to Paul; and yet since Timothy’s measure was not as capacious as Paul’s, and, perhaps, because he did not so diligently stir up his gift as Paul, his life, beautiful and useful though it was, lacked the luxuriant fruitfulness of Paul’s. The condition of our doing our best is that we allow God to do the best He can through us. The apostle never slackened the strain he put upon all his powers, but he depended upon them less and less as efficient agents for his high ends. “When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God”—“My speech and my preaching was in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power." And so must it be with us ; every faculty must be used, but used in subordination to, and dependence upon, the Spirit of God. The greatest of our gifts must consecrate and crown all the rest.

And be our other gifts few or many, brilliant or humble, the reason for stirring up the flame of the great gift is just the same in all cases. For you would not have your poor gift without the fire that can make even it glow with fervour, as I have often seen the lips of poor, illiterate, feeble-minded men burn with rapture which gave beauty and charm to all they said. And you would not have your finer gifts, if you possess such, bereft of that energy which is a touch of omnipotence, nor left without that inspiration which is a pulse of the heart of infinite love. An unspiritual talented preacher is one of the saddest sights under heaven, An unspiritual untalented Sunday school teacher is quite as sad.

No one can tell the wealth of his gift in the possession of the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of faith, and faith can remove mountains. If our mountains are neither removed nor removing, plainly we must stir up our gift. He is the Spirit of love, and love never faileth. He is the Spirit of long-suffering and of patience, and who can say what work that will be when patience has had her *perfect* work ? He is the Spirit of power, and when God gives *His* strength to the feeble and to them that have no might, who can withstand them ?

Let us put ourselves in remembrance that we may stir up the gift of God. Let us remember the day of our first submission, and how it ought to have implied a life-long submission, a continual yielding up of self and self-will. Let us remember the day of our consecration, the hopes which then gleamed in our heaven, the vows which then trembled on our lips. Let us remember the days of the Spirit of God we have seen, when we were anointed afresh with grace and power, and we went forth rejoicing to new services and new sacrifices. If the promise of these times has been blasted or dimmed, let us seek the renewing of our hearts by the Spirit which dwelleth in us. If the promise has been fulfilled, or even more than fulfilled, still let us honour

the Spirit by whom we have been kept, sanctified, and used. In whatever sense we be ministers of God let us approve ourselves "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the *Holy Ghost*, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report."

STREATHAM HILL.

J. P. GLEDSTONE.

The Eternal Child.

"THY HOLY CHILD JESUS."—*Acts* iv. 30.

THOUGH the word rendered child came often to be used to describe a servant of any age, just as *garçon* has among our French neighbours, its root idea is that of descent, and not only of descent but of early age. Indeed it denoted just what everybody pictures when he fills up with thought the word *child*. So I do not follow the revisers in the variation they make here from the older version. But retaining the familiar translation, and carefully regarding the etymology and the usual meaning of the word, I hear, and I ask you to hear, twice in this brief prayer our Lord Jesus Christ spoken of to God as "Thy holy child Jesus." This prayer which seems to have been an intonation or chant, or certainly a joint utterance of some kind, is the first recorded common prayer of the Christian Church, and is, therefore, charged with interest. This twice-employed designation of our Saviour is, however, sufficient theme for our thought now. Contemplating Jesus as God's child, we notice—

I.—THIS DESCRIPTION—CHILD—SEEMS TO BE AN ETERNALLY APPROPRIATE CHARACTERISATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Is it not appropriate of Him as we dwell on *the infinite past*? The nature of God, of God in Christ, cannot be analysed by us as

a naturalist would analyse a sea shell or an insect's wing. Great as the mystery of His pre-existent life is, we cannot accept the authority of Scripture and deny that pre-existence. He was in the bosom of God; the eternal Wisdom daily God's delight, the Word who was with God; the everlasting Son of the Father; for if God did not become a Father, but was eternally Father, there must have been eternally a Son. He was ever God's holy child.

Is it not appropriate of Him as we study *His incarnate life on earth*? There are always in His conduct and character the simple beauties we admire in a child—freshness, sensitiveness, wonder, simplicity, even to the point of exquisite artlessness, which is the child's glory. He wanted everybody else to be a child even as He felt He was a child, and so He said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." He wanted everybody else to be a child even as He felt He was a child, and so He said, "Except ye become as little children ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The holy child Jesus—a man in years but a child in spirit—is the ideal of the highest character and of the most blessed life.

Is it not appropriate of Him as we contemplate *the life He is living now*? He lives still, and lives to care for, to help, to bless us. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us; for such a High Priest became us, who is holy, guileless, undefiled." That guilelessness is the distinctive virtue of God's holy child Jesus. It is that which gives a deathless charm to the prayer of our own childhood—

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Teach me, Lord, to come to Thee."

Our simplicity is our plea with the simplicity of Him who through eternal ages remains the holy child Jesus; who is to-day the *Lamb* in the midst of the throne.

II.—THE HISTORY OF THIS CHILD CHRIST ILLUSTRATES MUCH IN THE LIFE OF MANY AN ONE WHO IS ALSO GOD'S CHILD. As we have seen, Jesus Christ is in some senses unique, solitary, alone, as

God's child—His only begotten Son. But in many aspects He is the Brother, the Type of everyone who is God's child. His lips spake of "My Father and your Father,"—"He is not ashamed to call us brethren." Remembering that we notice—

First: *God's child may be born in very lowly circumstances.* Here is a babe in a stable! Yet this is He of whom the angel-song announces, "This day is born in the city of David . . . the Lord." So is it still. The problem of overcrowding in our great cities, of the miserable hovels which, in the satire of modern speech we call "the homes" of tens of thousands of our people, recalls the wondrous story of the mother and the child of 1800 years ago, for whom there was no room in the inn. For it still happens that wealth and art and privileged classes have "no room" for many a little one who is God's child. You must thread your way up that narrow alley, you must lift the latch of that obscure cottage, nay, you must cross the threshold of that hovel and there in penury and want, with a cradle no better than the famous manger of Bethlehem, and surroundings as bare and comfortless as those of the stable of the inn, you will find many an infant, who as surely as any heir in the nursery of the mansion, or any prince in palace splendours, is *God's child*. "Somebody's child," the brave woman cried who threw herself between a little boy and danger, to save him from death. "God's child" we say as we seek to bring into Sunday School even the poorest and the lowliest and the neediest we can find.

Second: *God's child is often brought up in the midst of most adverse circumstances.* We recal Nazareth where He was brought up who was "God's holy child Jesus." "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Go through its streets. In that hut lives ignorance, and there prejudice, and there bigotry, and there cruelty. The atmosphere of the place is deadening to all that is good. But even before He was brought there He had been down into Egypt. Flight by night down into land of bondage and idolatry (Carl Muller's picture; all objects take form of the cross). So, many a life of the little one who is God's child is in Nazareth, where he is not so much "brought up as dragged up." He goes down to Egypt; has *crosses*.

Third : *God's child should early be accustomed to the means of grace.* You find it said of God's holy child Jesus, that His custom was to go to synagogue at Nazareth ; synagogue was blending of church and school ; and at twelve years of age you are fascinated as you watch the boy Jesus in the Temple in the midst of the doctors—*i.e.*, the teachers. Who would not train all young vines as the True Vine was thus being trained ; Who would not tend all lambs of the flock as God's Lamb was thus being tended ?

Fourth : *God's child will be the subject of the highest spiritual consciousness.* The boy Jesus, at twelve years old, utters a sentence that becomes a sort of key-note to all His subsequent experience and work. "Wist ye not," &c. Relationship to God ! Obligation towards duty. Do you ask at what age a young heart can glow with this light and pulse with this life ? I answer I cannot tell. But who dare limit the age ! Certain it is that when the lips of childhood can with any sense of reality appeal to God as Father, and feel about His will, the deep, tender, constraint of *must* ! that childhood is sacred, is Divine ! To bring young hearts to that is your lofty aim ; nothing less can satisfy. To *awaken* that secret of relationship to God and to duty is purpose of the whole machinery, apparatus, activity of Sunday School work. Much may precede, much may follow ; repentance ; faith in Christ ; the help of the Divine Spirit ; but amidst all, and as climax of all, there must be this, a life of such loving obedience to God as Jesus lived.

Fifth : *God's child will shew that he is the subject of this highest consciousness by his daily life.* What is the next step God's holy child Jesus takes after He has uttered this intense, yet apparently simple, conviction of His heart ? Will He isolate Himself from villagers and become a recluse, or seek some office of sanctity, some calling whose sacred functions shall lift Him out of the circle of a carpenter's family and away from the routine of so humble a home ? No, a thousand times *no*. "He went with His mother and Joseph to Nazareth, and He was subject unto them." In obedience, in truthfulness, in kindness, in sweet charities of home life, Christian children will prove that they are Christian.

Sixth: *God's child must develop into a future of beauty and strength.* Growth is the law of life. Perfect growth the law of the perfect life. Every detail of such growth is affirmed of The Christ. He grew in stature and in wisdom. He waxed strong in spirit. He advanced in favour with God and men. The grace of God was upon Him. Such growth which is at once indicated and caused by such grace is the destiny of every true life. Our ideal and our hope is here. "Beloved now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We shall be like Him, for we shall see him as He is."

EDITOR.

The Lord's Prayer.

"OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME. THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD. AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER. AMEN."—*Matthew* vi. 9-13.

AMONG the myriads of creatures existing on earth man is the greatest; some have greater physical power, some are swifter of foot, others can soar higher into the clouds than he; but man is appropriately called "Lord of this lower creation," for "Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands, Thou hast put all things under his feet, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour." He is great here in having "dominion" over all inferior creatures, representing God in ruling power. He is great when, at the head of a nation, he forms and enacts laws to rule millions of people in peace; great when leading vast armies on the field of battle to conquer the enemy of his country; and he is especially so when, returning home victorious, having conquered his enemies, while poets and musicians sing his praises

in highest strains. But here he is eminently great above all, as he alone, of all creatures, *can have* and *has* the privilege of holding communion with God—this is his prerogative alone. This is the highest glory to which a man can attain on earth—bowing his knees willingly before the Father of spirits, and presenting himself a “living sacrifice” unto God; for prayer implies the yielding of ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, to Him, to be taught and governed by Him, saying in the spirit of our Saviour, “Father, not my will, but Thine be done.”

I can imagine nothing more beautiful upon earth than a father, on a Lord’s-day morning, after a week of labour, turmoil, and anxiety, sitting in his chair, his wife in another, with children around their table, like olive plants, having read a portion of God’s Word, bending their knees together before the “Father of all mercies,” resigning themselves to Him, committing themselves to His care, seeking Divine guidance, and to be prepared for a higher and a better world. This is what we see in the simple and yet sublime prayer which our Lord taught us. We shall take the two following views of it,—

THE EXPOSITIONAL. THE DOCTRINAL.

I.—THE EXPOSITIONAL.—The Lord’s prayer is the most simple, and at the same time the most comprehensive. A child may understand it, and yet the most profound theologian may well feel that the subjects are beyond his comprehension. It is like an atlas, on the maps of which some objects are clearly defined, and others are indistinct. It contains more thoughts than words. It is both a special and general prayer—the most personal and most catholic—containing more of principles than details.

God has been pleased to call Himself by other names in the Scriptures, such as “Creator,” “King,” “Judge,” but He is called “*Father*” here. God is the Creator of all the earth; but if our Saviour had used that name here it would not have answered the purpose so well. God, as Creator, is too great for frail, imperfect, finite man to comprehend. “Canst thou by searching find out God?” I have traversed the sea from north to south, I am lost in wonder by contemplating the immensity of the sea; but God has “measured the waters (seas) in the hollow of His hand.” The

heavens overwhelm me with their grandeur, it seems to me endless space; but "He stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and meteth it with the span." I am a mystery to myself, and cannot explain the nature and workings of my own spirit, how much less can I understand the eternal God, who is the infinite Father of spirits?

Neither does the metaphorical language of Scripture assist me here. "Hath not the potter over the clay," &c. This is an argument for the sovereignty of God; but it shows also the vast difference between man as a creature and God as Creator—"Potter and clay." The potter is a living, rational, intelligent being, and can mould the clay to any form he wishes, and has perfect control over it; but the clay is lifeless matter. There is no communion between the potter and the clay; and in like manner the chasm between me and God as a Creator is too wide for me to pass over.

God is named "*King*"; but this is a most imperfect symbol of Him. An earthly king is one of us, a weak, frail, imperfect mortal, subject to wants, fears, diseases, and death. He is dependent upon others for the supply of his wants; "the king himself is served (subsists) by the field." But then he is greater in his authority than all his subjects, and has dominion over them. The king, in his official capacity, enacts laws, and commands his subjects to obey, and has the power of the whole realm to enforce them. "Our King" would be right, but not the best word in this prayer—too far from us. "Judge" is nearer than the king. The king makes laws, the judge administers them. We seldom or never see the king, but the judge visits us once a year; and it is something to see one if we have grievances to make known. But it is not always gratifying to see the judge, it depends upon what side of the law we are, for he is a "terror to evil-doers." We want a term nearer still, and we have it in the Lord's prayer. We understand more of this, and appreciate it more highly than all the others.

As "Creator," we are His creatures, and can hold communion with Him through the medium of His works; but there is a want of nearness in this communion. As a "*King*" we are His

subjects; He enacts laws, and we know how the Israelites trembled at His presence on Sinai. As a "Judge" we dread Him, because we have sinned. The word Judge pre-supposes a crime, and we feel that we are transgressors of His law, and are averse to meet the "Judge of the whole earth." But as a "Father" we *can* and *may* draw nigh unto Him with confidence; although we know that we have not kept His laws, we are assured that a father is merciful as well as just.

The king expects obedience. The judge administers *justice* only; it is not supposed that he has a heart to sympathise with the prisoner. The judge has nothing to do with mercy, it is not his province. In a case years ago the prisoner said, "I am confused, I cannot answer," having been questioned for hours. But the judge said, "Try to answer, it is a very simple question,"—no sympathy. But we want someone near us, to teach, protect, and guide us. We break laws, we make vows and fail to fulfil them; we need sympathy, love, tenderness, and forgiveness a thousand times in a day. Our "Father" is near us, amongst us, to oversee us, before we go to rest at night, when we rise in the morning. When we have sinned we have liberty to go to Him and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." The earthly father often feels more than the transgressing child; and while he runs to meet his father saying, "I will never do so again," the large tears filling his father's eyes prove that pardon flows out to meet him.

Mind, be a king, to make laws in your family, else you will have several small kings, and it will be a reign of confusion, if not of terror. Be a judge, to administer justice, in your family; but if that is all, your children's hearts will become as cold as ice towards you, and as hard as the nether millstone. Laws and justice *only* will not induce them to love you. God's manifestation of His love towards the world proves this. "Father" is the most acceptable, nearest, and dearest name to use.

"*Which art in heaven.*" Father He is, but great and glorious, dwelling in the heavens, high above all other fathers; therefore we should not rush thoughtlessly into His presence, but draw nigh to Him with filial fear and profound reverence.

"*Hallowed be Thy name.*" Hallow and sanctify are synonymous terms in the bible; but there is a difference in sanctifying a sinner and to "sanctify the Lord our God." When man is sanctified, his sins and guilt are removed from him, and the image of God restored to his spirit. But when we hallow God's name, we neither add to, nor detract from, His glory. "God is light (purity), and in Him is no darkness at all," consequently to hallow His name is to acknowledge Him to be what He is—good, pure, righteous, and holy, and to give Him that sacred place in our hearts to which He has a claim. They reverse this prayer who break the third commandment. The Jew used to wipe his pen before writing the name of "Jehovah," so great and awful did it appear to him. Think of it seriously and it will appear the same to you.

"*Thy kingdom come.*" "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "Righteousness," or justice, between God and man as well as between man and his fellow man. "Peace" towards God as well as "peace on earth," instead of war. And "joy" (spiritual rejoicing) which raises us above the earth. "The kingdom of God is within you"; it is a living power, a divine principle, bringing your whole nature in conformity with His holy will.

"*Thy will be done,*" &c. That is the prayer. The extent of it is, "*as it is done in heaven.*" It is done in heaven by all, instantly and cheerfully, glad to have the privilege. The angels which Isaiah saw had, besides two wings to hide their face and feet, two also to fly with, indicating their willingness to perform the will of God. May Thy will be done on earth by us, by all, as it is done in heaven.

"*Give us this day,*" &c. We have had three petitions or desires expressed with regard to God; now we turn to ourselves—three petitions again. "*Give us*"—we need *something*. "*Forgive us*"—we want to be freed from, to get rid of, *something*. "*Lead us not*"—we want to be kept from *something*. The first is supporting grace. The second is forgiving grace. The third is restraining grace. "*Give us*"—we are unable to support ourselves. "*Forgive us*"—we are too guilty and too weak to

bear the burden ourselves. Remove it, O Lord. "*Lead us not*"—prevent us from being led; we cannot trust ourselves; temptations are too fiery and powerful for us. "Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins." We need restraining grace.

"*For Thine is the kingdom*"—Thou hast dominion over all. "*And the power*"—there is strength enough. "*And the glory*"—there is honour enough. This is the Doxology of the prayer.

II.—THE DOCTRINAL VIEW OF THE PRAYER. (1) *That God is our Father in Christ Jesus.* This prayer, otherwise, would be appropriate for the demons as well as Christians; God is their Father as Creator. He is Creator, King, and Judge of good and evil angels as well as men; but in the sense here used He is the Father of the true believer only. "Because you are *sons* God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father." This produces a filial feeling in our hearts. (2) *The Christian religion only reveals to its subject the nature of his God, and his eternal home hereafter.* We are taught in the first commandment that there is but one God; but I know nothing of His nature from that; but our Saviour supplies that. "God is a Spirit," that is His nature, and the nature of the worship due to Him is explained. "Must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Christ came forth from the "Father" to reveal to us the nature of God, the worship due to Him, and also to reveal another world, which is the "home" of the saints. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," &c. He says to all believers who mourn for their pious departed friend, "Thy brother shall rise again." The heathen hopes, but has no foundation for his hope; he trusts, but trembles for fear he may be disappointed; but Christ says, "He that believeth in Me shall never die." (3) *There is, inferentially, as much of Christ's mediatorship implied here as in other parts of Scripture.* It is said that this prayer is not an example for us, because the name of Christ is not in it. The assertion *may* be true, but the proof is deficient. I dare not approach God in any manner but through Christ. He is mighty, just, inexorable; I am guilty, I fear Him and flee from Him. God is dreadful to me apart from Christ. His eyes are too pure

to behold iniquity. He cannot tolerate me in His presence. This prayer is an impossibility unless it *implies* a Mediator. Then it is a mockery put in my lips by the best and holiest upon the earth. I dare not say, "Give us," "Forgive us," "Lead us not into temptation." Justice alone I can claim without Christ, and that makes me tremble. But through Jesus Christ I can say, "Forgive us our sins," "for Thou hast forgiveness that Thou mayest be feared," in full faith that I shall receive. (4) *The glory of God is to be our chief aim in prayer.* "Father"—Thy name, kingdom, and will is the first part; our wants and sins and weakness in the middle of the prayer; and God's power, kingdom, and glory in the end. The angels' song intimates this. "Glory to God in the highest," first; then, "Peace on earth and good-will to men," follows. If we care for His glory, He will care for our wants. A good mother prayed for the salvation of her two sons, thinking more of her sons than the glory of God; she reversed the prayer, as instructed by a good man of God, and succeeded, whereas before she had failed.

The first part of this prayer will be superseded in Heaven. It will be unnecessary then. His name will be hallowed, His kingdom will have come, His will done by all the inhabitants of the world of bliss. No one will say there, "Give us," as all will be "filled with the fulness of God" for ever. But the last part—the Doxology of the prayer—will be ceaselessly sung by myriads for eternal ages. "Unto Him be glory and dominion for ever."

SWANSEA.

F. SAMUEL.

CHRISTIANITY AND CLASS DISTINCTIONS.—"In Christianity religion becomes the solvent of class distinctions by its doctrine of the organic unity of the church or household of faith. The ideal which it sets before us is that of a common or corporate life in which individual or class exclusiveness vanishes—a community in which the loftiest cannot say to the lowliest, I have no need of thee—from which pride and envy, scorn and hatred, all forms of selfishness are eliminated, and wherein the life and happiness of the whole becomes dearer to each individual than his own."

—JOHN CAIRD, D.D.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Wicked Rich Men.

Chapter v. 1-3.—“GO TO NOW, YE RICH MEN, WEEP AND HOWL FOR YOUR MISERIES THAT SHALL COME UPON YOU. YOUR RICHES ARE CORRUPTED, AND YOUR GARMENTS ARE MOTHEATEN. YOUR GOLD AND SILVER IS RUSTED; AND THE RUST OF THEM SHALL BE A WITNESS AGAINST YOU, AND SHALL EAT YOUR FLESH AS IT WERE FIRE. YE HAVE HEAPED TREASURE TOGETHER FOR THE LAST DAYS?”

THERE is no difficulty in the interpretation of these words; they are the stern and righteous denunciation of the sin of the wicked rich men, of whom the apostle has already told us that they “oppressed” the members of the Christian Churches of his day, and “blasphemed” that worthy name by which they were called. The whole strain of the passage shows that it refers to unbelievers outside of the Church, that we have here the condemnation of heartless, rapacious, pleasure-loving men, men who scrupled at no wickedness, even to the “condemning and the killing of the just.” There is no difficulty, so far as the reference of the words to the wicked rich men is concerned; but there is a difficulty as to the reason of its insertion here, specially as the condemnation is so extended and so minutely detailed. Why did the apostle turn aside, so to speak, and pour out the vials of Divine wrath upon wicked rich men in a letter exclusively addressed to those who were so frequently their victims? what purpose had he to serve in speak-

ing of them as he here does? It is scarcely a reply to say that the apostle, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, full of the spirit of prophecy, is foretelling what will happen to these men in the last days; this is true, there *is* the ring of the old prophetic spirit in it; the mantle of Elijah or of Amos seems to have fallen for the moment upon the Christian apostle, but this does not answer the question why wicked rich men outside are addressed and denounced, why the doom of those who are without is uttered in the presence of those only who are within. A glance at the seventh verse will give us, in part at least, the explanation; there we find one of the reasons of the announcement of the approaching doom of the wicked rich. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." Stablish your hearts; be comforted in this,—that oppressions and persecutions

A consolation
to know that
the oppressor
will cease.

are not to last for ever,—the oppressors are to be spoiled, the persecutors are to die! It is ever a comfort to know that iniquity in high places is speedily to be cast down; it *is* a very present consolation to be told that the greedy and rapacious oppressor, "flown with insolence and wine," is to be crushed under a hand mightier than his own! "Be patient therefore, brethren," the day "of the Lord draweth nigh," "the Judge standeth at the door."

This is the answer to the question so far. The reason, so far, for this prolonged and minute exposure of the sin and doom of wicked rich men, but only so far; there is another and a much more important reason than this;—not only does the apostle, or rather the Holy Ghost through the apostle, speak "comfortable words" to believers here, he speaks also, and much more loudly, warning words; the denunciations of the doom of wicked rich men in the hearing of poor Christian men are to prevent their coming into the same condemnation. As if he would say,—"You see what abandonment to the love of riches has brought these men to; take heed to yourselves lest *your* hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon *you*. I charge you that are rich in this world that ye be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches; but in the living God, who

giveth us richly all things to enjoy," "for the love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." It is then as coming within the embrace of this great principle of Scripture teaching—the denunciation of doom

Denunciation of doom a warning of mercy. *against the unbeliever is a warning of mercy for the believer*—that the passage before us is to be expounded to a Christian congregation.

Observe, to begin with, that in itself the apostle has nothing to say against a man being rich; he does not denounce the possession of riches; he does not condemn the rich man for being rich. Scripture is too wise to make such an assertion, **Not wrong to be rich.** it does not lay itself open, on the one hand, to the communism that would plead its authority for the wholesale robbery of the prudent and industrious by the thriftless and lazy, or, on the other, to the infidelity that would like to find in it such a weapon as could be so easily turned against it to its hurt. In the whole of the Scriptures you shall not find a single word which, fairly understood, can be made to mean that a man may not enrich himself by the use of all the faculties which God has given to him; or that he is not entitled to the possession of the riches which fairly fall to his lot. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit*;" there is no excluding of the rich here; for they may be, and often have been, as poor in spirit, as genuinely humble, as the most poverty-stricken disciple that ever called himself by the name of Christ. "*Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation!*" And was it not true? Was it possible that other than woe could come upon those who, with this Messiah before them, could proudly and selfishly, avariciously and profanely, reject and despise the very Salvation that had come within their reach? "*Woe unto you that are rich!*" "Jesus is not dealing here with moral philosophy; He is dealing with historical fact" (*Godet*); and it was the fact that it was the rich and powerful that, as a class, opposed and set at nought this salvation of God, and so brought woe upon themselves. But this does not mean—only the perversity of a malignant infidelity could make it mean—that woe was to be to all rich men because

they were rich ! In a book* recently published, and of which I saw a few weeks ago several copies attractively displayed in a bookseller's window (doubtless he did not know what the book contained), I find the following given as the doctrine of Christ concerning riches ;—" One of the precepts of Jesus," I quote from the book, " One of the precepts of Jesus is, ' Take no thought for the morrow : ' a teaching that strikes at the root of all honest industry, frugality, and forethought : a precept showing an utter ignorance of man and his needs : a precept that, reduced into practice, would destroy the very basis of all prosperous communities, all civilization, all progress, and make the whole world mendicants and savages. Take another instance. ' That to be poor is a virtue : to be rich, a vice : the poor are blessed, woe awaits the rich. ' " The writer of these sentences knew that " take no thought " meant take no over-anxious thought ; he knew that " poor " meant poor in spirit ; and he knew that there were rich disciples of Christ who were not asked to give up their riches when they became disciples : that it was a matter entirely optional with them whether, and how much of their riches, they would throw into the common stock of the cause they had embraced ! And yet he penned these sentences, blaspheming the Worthy Name ! I refer to it as showing that it is only by misrepresentations like these that there can be given even the semblance of truth to the assertion that Scripture condemns the rich man for being rich ; and I would not have referred to it had it not been a specimen of the kind of thing that is being thrown broadcast upon readers of all kinds, in cheap copies and large editions, under the misleading title of " MORALITY." . . .

I have dwelt on the fact that Scripture nowhere speaks against the possession of riches in themselves, that it assumes as one of the first principles of society that there must be rich and poor ; that it inculcates those practices and virtues which must lead to riches, prudence, industry, honesty ; and I have mainly done so that I might the more freely turn to that other aspect of riches, on which, as being the power of God to deliver men from what

* " Morality," by the Author of " Business," &c.

degrades and destroys them, the Scriptures have so much to say: I mean the deceitfulness of riches, the innumerable temptations to which rich men are exposed from without, the terribly demoralizing power the unchecked possession of riches exerts within, the altogether fatal misfortune in the case of so many of being rich.

It is not wrong in itself to have many possessions, but it is terribly dangerous to have them. Who that knows anything of the human heart would dispute it? Who that has watched the career of this one or that one, for even a generation, but has had pathetic evidence of its truth. They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in perdition and destruction.

Just look at it as it comes out in the character and conduct of the rich men whom James exposes and denounces in the words before us. They were not always so bad; there were times in their past history when they had been comparatively kindly; when they did a good turn to a neighbour without hope of reward; when they preferred getting wealth honestly rather than dishonestly by fair bargaining rather than by secret over-reaching or open fraud; when they did not pamper merely themselves, and when, perhaps, they were rather ashamed of themselves when it was suggested to them by the example of some just and self-denying man that theirs, after all, was but a selfish and sensual life. No man becomes very base all at once; but let the ignoble vice, the lust and love of money, but get a hold, let a man but once give place to it, and this is what it will, by-and-bye, make of him—utterly selfish, so that he will defraud even the day labourer of his day's hire; besottedly sensual, so that he will give himself up to the lusts of the flesh, running after all uncleanness with greediness, not knowing that he is nourishing himself for the day of slaughter; cruelly malicious, so that if a just man shall cross his path, if the just life will shame his unjust one, he will condemn and kill him! “Your riches are corrupted, your garments are motheaten, your gold and silver is rusted.” Does the apostle mean by this that he already

Not wrong to
be rich, but
dangerous.

No man base
all at once.

anticipates their doom when it will be the same to them as if all this had taken place? Is this a lively description of what is to be in the day of slaughter, when their miseries shall come upon them; when they shall weep and howl for their heaped up treasures; when the rust shall eat their flesh as it were fire? Or does he not also mean us to see here the evidence of the sin that was bringing on their doom; the withholding of that which was meet from the starving and ill-clad; the cruel selfishness that would rather let the fruits rot and the garments be moth-eaten than feed the hungry or clothe the naked? Doubtless it was the latter as well; and what a terrible sight it was which the eye of the inspired apostle saw in "The chambers of imagery"—a wicked rich man's storehouses and barns! Outside and all around the hungry, ill-clad poor, orphans and widows, with none to provide for them, to whom but a very little from the rich man's stores would have been life from the dead. Inside, in barns, the fruits of the field; in storehouses all manner of garments and clothing, rotting, wasting, because their possessors were too selfish, too heartless to part with them! It is too horrible. But did not something very like this take place in our own country not so very long ago, when, before the repeal of the Corn Laws, grain was kept hoarded in barns till it rotted, rather than that it should be sold for less than famine prices, when men and women and children were starving in the midst of the plenty which greedy and grasping men withheld from them, and when the curse of God and of man was audibly enough uttered against them! That time has passed away, the possibility of such iniquity as that can never return; but may there not, apart from such heartlessness and very much as the result of an unthinking unconcern, "for evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart;" may there not be something that would need to be classified along with these heartless forms of the crime here denounced where there is nothing of the kind suspected? Suppose the eye of the inspired apostle were to search and bring to light from wardrobes and chests and trunks and spare rooms and lumber rooms, the moth-eaten garments, which need not have

The cruelty
of the
wicked rich.

been moth-eaten if they had been long ago brought out and given to clothe the ill-clad, would he not find something there to expose and condemn, to put under the curse he utters against the wicked rich men of his day: "Your garments are moth-eaten?" It is a very natural thing, a feeling that one would not like to say a harsh word against, to wish to preserve the clothing, the little garments which, perhaps, the mother's own hands made or adorned for the child of her affections who is no longer with her, who is now not only *of*, but *in*, the kingdom of heaven. There is a sad satisfaction in folding away what will never more be needed here, a sad satisfaction in taking them out again and letting memory, by their aid, bring up again the bright face, the happy smile, the well-remembered tones. Yes, it is natural: let no word be uttered that would contradict or depreciate it; but might there not be something better than this, something that would give a keener joy than this, something that would better please "Him who pleased not Himself, but though He was rich,

for our sakes became poor"? Is there no other

A winter's
appeal.

little child, of the same age as yours, not so well clad as yours was, not so well protected from the

cold, to whose mother your visit would be as the visit of God, if you were to make up a little bundle for her child from what is of no more use to you—just retaining a few memorials here and there that you cannot part with just yet. It would be blessed to retain them; would it not, this being the spirit of the sacrifice, for sacrifice it would be; would it not be more blessed to give them up? There is a sacredness that belongs to the garments our dead friends have worn, something of their presence seems to linger round them, and it is with no careless hand we lay them by. But the winter is coming on, and there will be many cases of distress, the needs of poor men and women who have none to relieve them except such as you, men and women who have not brought poverty and want upon themselves by ill-doing, but who are the victims of those years of depression of trade from which all are suffering. There will be many such cases of distress, very near to us it may be, easily found out. Shall we not seek them out, learn their wants, and if we find we can supply some of

these wants by parting with what is, and what has grown to be, very dear to us, shall we hesitate, even though natural feeling should interpose?

Is it hard to part with the garments that were worn by the dear departed? Well, then, have we none of our own that we could easily spare, which we have not had on for ever so long, and which, or the fashion of which, we have outgrown? It would be a pity to keep them if they could be of use to anybody

It is more
blessed
to give than
to receive.

else, it would be a pity to keep them so long that the searching eye of God should find them out and say, they are useless now to yourself or to anybody else; your garments are moth-eaten. To seek out the

cause that we know not, to send portions to those for whom nothing has been provided, to clothe the ill-clad, "to lessen the sum of human suffering and to increase the sum of human happiness:" to bring a rich revenue of glory to God, who gives such pitiful and compassionate hearts unto men, is not this the call which comes loudly to us from the sufferings of suffering men, from the example of our Saviour, from the misery and unhappiness of wicked rich men who are more miserable and more unhappy than the victims of their cruel neglect; is not this the call which comes to us, to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in

Benediction.

obscurity and thy darkness shall be as the noonday. And the Lord shall guide thee continually and satisfy thy soul in drought, and thou shalt be like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

HUMAN MERIT.—"The truly benevolent 'Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.' I have heard of a powerful comparison of virtue in this respect to Eurydice; if you look back on her she flies. It is hence the great object of the Christian religion to prevent all thoughts of our own merit."

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness.]"

No. XVI.

God's Government of the World.

"AND AFTER THESE THINGS I SAW FOUR ANGELS STANDING ON THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH, HOLDING THE FOUR WINDS OF THE EARTH, THAT THE WIND SHOULD NOT BLOW ON THE EARTH, NOR ON THE SEA, NOR ON ANY TREE. AND I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL ASCENDING FROM THE EAST, HAVING THE SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD: AND HE CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE TO THE FOUR ANGELS, TO WHOM IT WAS GIVEN TO HURT THE EARTH AND THE SEA, SAYING, HURT NOT THE EARTH, NEITHER THE SEA, NOR THE TREES, TILL WE HAVE SEALED THE SERVANTS OF OUR GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS. AND I HEARD THE NUMBER OF THEM WHICH WERE SEALED: AND THERE WERE SEALED AN HUNDRED AND FORTY AND FOUR THOUSAND OF ALL THE TRIBES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF REUBEN WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF GAD WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF ASER WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF NEPHTHALIM WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF MANASSES WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF SIMEON WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF ISSACHAR WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF ZABULON WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF JOSEPH WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND. OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN WERE SEALED TWELVE THOUSAND."—*Rev. vii. 1-8.*

HERE is a further sketch of
John's wonderful dream;
whether it is a dream or

vision, sleeping or waking, I
know not. Psychologists
assure us, and our own ex-

perience confirms it, that in a very brief time a man might see a vast number of wonderful things. He may dream volumes in one night. In the dreams—Divine dreams as I believe—of John, there is not a little connected with the Jews, the sceneries, customs, and ceremonies of the Jews. In the one here recorded, for example, we have all the Jewish tribes specified, with the exception of the tribe of Dan. How natural it is for men when they dream to have visions of events connected with their life and in which they were most deeply interested. John's young life (he being a Jew) would be Judaic.

These dreams I pretend not to interpret, the interpretations that are given in various expositions are so conflicting and in some cases so absurd and even blasphemous, as to warn any sensible man from applying his faculties and time in such a work of exegesis. My purpose throughout is otherwise. *Were we to grant what the theistical infidel maintains, that there is nothing especially divine and inspired in the Scriptures, and that the Bible is to be*

classed with the religious books of other peoples, ages, and climes, we would still hold it as the most useful and priceless book in the world. And for this reason, that the human mind can only advance as it discovers, reaches, and realises the highest truths connected with God and the soul, and that there is no book extant so potent to suggest, so grand to illustrate, and so fitted to impress those truths as the book we call the Bible. For this purpose, then, we are at all times justified, nay bound, to use this unique and priceless volume.

The subject of these verses is *God's government of the world*, and they suggest two facts concerning that government.

I.—THAT GOD EMPLOYS THE HIGHEST ORDER OF CELESTIAL INTELLIGENCES IN THE CONDUCT OF HIS GOVERNMENT. "After these things (after this) I saw four angels standing on (at) the four corners of the earth." The existence of intelligences in the universe, varying in capacity and degree, but all loyal to heaven and transcending immeasurably

man's attributes of wisdom, power, and speed is suggested by analogy and abundantly taught in the Scriptures, both the Old and the New. Now these creatures are here represented as occupying all parts of nature, "*standing on the four corners of the earth,*" and thus controlling the winds of the world, the east, the west, the south, and the north. They are endowed with power to turn the winds to any point of the compass and to regulate them to any degree of power or temperature, raising them to a fury that will shake the earth, and reducing them to a calmness hushing the world to sleep. Is there anything absurd in this? Assuredly not. It is natural, rational, and consistent with every part of nature. Everywhere through the universe God acts by mediation. Nowhere throughout immensity does He appear to act directly, matter on matter, and mind on all. The principle is enunciated in the Old Testament. "It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens,

and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel" (Hosea ii. 21, 22).* The mere scientist accounts for the various objects and phenomena of the material world by what he calls blind forces or natural laws; I prefer ascribing all under God to the "*angels standing on the four corners of the earth, and holding the four winds.*" A wonderful view of the universe, truly, we have here. True, a telescope opens to my vision world upon world and system upon system until imagination reels at the prospect, and my spirit seems crushed with a sense of its own insignificance, but in these words I have a telescope by which I see the wide fields of air, the rolling planets, the minute and the vast, the proximate and the remote peopled and working, reaching in regular gradation from my little being up to the ineffable throne, and all under God.† Notice—

II.—That God IN EMPLOYING THESE AGENCIES ENJOINS ON THEM A SPECIAL REGARD

* For a homily on those words see *Homilist*, vol. vi., page 120.

† For remarks on this subject see *Homilist*, vol. iv., page 145.

FOR THE INTERESTS OF RE-DEEMED MEN IN THE WORLD.

"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

Why not "*hurt the earth*"?

Why not reduce all nature to a wreck? There is a grand, benevolent reason, "*till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*" The

Jewish mind regarded Israel as especially the elect of God, and all the tribes in their esteem were specially Divine. This, of course, was a fiction of national vanity. But take them here as a symbolical representation of all the truly good men upon the earth, and we have the idea that God requires all His intelligent ministries to regard the interests of such. The seal must be regarded as implying security. Here is an angel rising as it were from "the

door of the dawn" from the east, with a seal in order to effect the security of the good. Angels, we are taught, are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be the heirs of salvation."

Numerous are the instances recorded in the Bible in which we see them render assistance to man. They rescued Lot from Sodom and guarded Daniel in the lion's den; they directed Joseph and Mary into Egypt and liberated the apostles from prison. They directed Cornelius to Peter and wafted the spirit of Lazarus to the skies. They rejoice over the conversion of sinners; they have a charge over the righteous, they encamp round about them, they bear them up in their hands. Their ministry implies (1) That there is some method by which they can aid man. (2) That man's salvation is of paramount importance. (3) That service to the lowest is consonant with the highest greatness. (4) That man's obligation is to seek the spiritual good of his fellows. †

LONDON. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

† Another treatment of this text from the same pen will be found in *Homilist*, vol. xv., page 134.

No. XVII.

The Human Population in Heaven (No. 1).

“AFTER THIS I BEHELD, AND, LO, A GREAT MULTITUDE, WHICH NO MAN COULD NUMBER, OF ALL NATIONS, AND KINDREDS, AND PEOPLE, AND TONGUES, STOOD BEFORE THE THRONE, AND BEFORE THE LAMB, CLOTHED WITH WHITE ROBES, AND PALMS IN THEIR HANDS; AND CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, SAYING, SALVATION TO OUR GOD WHICH SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB. AND ALL THE ANGELS STOOD ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE, AND ABOUT THE ELDERS AND THE FOUR BEASTS, AND FELL BEFORE THE THRONE ON THEIR FACES, AND WORSHIPPED GOD, SAYING, AMEN: BLESSING, AND GLORY, AND WISDOM, AND THANKSGIVING, AND HONOUR, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, BE UNTO OUR GOD FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.”
—Rev. vii. 9-12.

THERE is one book, and only one, that presents to us humanity in heaven, and that is the Bible. This passage gives us a vision of unnumbered multitudes of men who once traversed this earthly scene of sin and sorrow, now in the bright world of the good. Of this human population in heaven four things are suggested—

I.—ITS NUMBERS ARE TOO GREAT FOR CALCULATION. “*After this I beheld, and, lo, (these things I saw, and behold) a great multitude which no man could number.*” The vastness of the population may be looked upon in four aspects. Here is—

First: *A reproof to all sectarianism.* Religious sects, which, alas, abound, even in

Christendom, and which are a calumny on the Gospel, nourish in the minds of their votaries the idea that heaven will be peopled mainly, if not entirely, by those within their own pale. Genuine religion knows nothing of sects. Men went to heaven by millions before churches or chapels existed. Here is—

Secondly: *An encouragement to all Christly work.* The best men on earth are the men employed in a Christly spirit to make men Christly. They find the opposition so strong, the wicked so numerous, and their efforts apparently so unsuccessful that they often lose heart. But let them realize that the human population of Heaven, even in the days of John, was

so vast no arithmetic could calculate; that population has been increasing from that date to this, and will increase in future ages so that it may be that no human being will be found in the universe without a Christly heart. Hell is only a little cloud upon the azure of immensity, and that cloud will one day be blotted out; it is only one discordant note in the harmonies of God's great Empire, and that note will ultimately be hushed in eternal silence. Here is—

Thirdly: *A response to all philanthropic desires.* In every human soul, I presume, there is an instinctive desire for the well-being of the race. True, this Divine instinct, like all others, is not only universally perverted, but dormant and submerged in depraved passions; but it is there, and awaits a resurrection. Here is the response to such an instinct. Here is—

Fourthly: *An attestation of benevolent Creatorship.* There is a theology popular, even in England in these days, which propounds the belief that the millions of mankind are doomed to bondage and blackness and darkness for ever.

Such a damnable doctrine reveals the Creator as malevolent, and spreads a gloom of ghastly horror over all created things. No; love is the fountal source of all things. Another thing suggested concerning the population in heaven is—

II.—ITS VARIETY INCLUDES ALL THE RACES OF MANKIND. "*Of all nations (out of every nation), and kindreds (of all tribes), and people, and tongues.*" All the men of this earth have their own little theatres of life and action. They are divided by space, by time, by physical relationship, by culture, by national distinctions, and thus become barbarians one to another. Now from all these scenes and departments of life the human population in heaven is made up. The human population in heaven is not known as Britons or Frenchmen or Germans, &c., nor as those of noble or ignoble blood, nor as those speaking this language or that, but as one grand confederation, and brotherhood in which all distinctions are lost. Learn here—

First: That our highest aim should be to become true

men. We should struggle out of social castes, religious denominationalisms, and national distinctions, and become true men, for these men alone populate heaven.

Secondly : That our highest love should be for men. Not love for lords or ladies, or nobles, or even for sages and poets, nor even for country, but for men; reverence man everywhere, in whatever land we find him, in whatever condition respect him because he is a man. A true man is the grandest creature under the heavens. Let us all become such, and respect such, and such only. Notice here concerning the population of heaven that—

III.—ITS GLORIOUSNESS TRANSCENDS ALL DESCRIPTION.

“Stood (standing) before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with (arrayed in) white robes, and palms in their hands.” Mark—

First: Their position. *“Stood (standing) before the throne.”* This is an emblematic description of the highest dignity. Moral goodness, and that alone, is Divine dignity. The Divine throne is not

material, it is spiritual; it is perfect moral excellence. Mark—

Secondly : Their attire. *“Clothed with (arrayed in) white robes.”* Life everywhere has its robes, its forms; robes which it makes for itself—which grow out of itself, as foliage out of the vital sap. Souls have their robes, and holy souls have robes white with purity. All their manifestations are pure. Mark—

Thirdly : Their blessed rest. *“Palms in their hands.”* The palms, Archbishop Trench considers, represent here not emblems of victory, but are emblems of rest.* Notice here, concerning the population in heaven—

IV.—ITS ENGAGEMENTS ARE RAPTUROUS IN DEVOTION.

“And cried (they cry) with a loud (great) voice, saying, Salvation to (unto) our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood (were standing) round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts (living creatures), and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen : Blessing,

* See Volume of Sermons by Archbishop Trench, published by Macmillan, p. 365.

and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." No doubt the engagements of this vast human population in heaven are very varied, according to their personal idiosyncracies, capacities, and proclivities. But in every department there is worship, the Supreme is adored; adored not formally or perfunctorily, but earnestly,—they cry with a loud voice. "SALVATION." *Restoration* from their former earthly condition is the master

theme. Ah, what is included in this salvation? It is restoration from ignorance to true knowledge, from impurity to holiness, from bondage to soul liberty, from selfishness to benevolence, from materialism to genuine spirituality, from the reign of wrong to the reign of right. This is the supreme theme of the saved in all worlds and for ever, and ascribed to God and none other in heaven or earth.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

No. XVIII.

The Human Population in Heaven (No. 2).

"AND ONE OF THE ELDERS ANSWERED, SAYING UNTO ME, WHAT ARE THESE WHICH ARE ARRAYED IN WHITE ROBES? AND WHENCE CAME THEY? AND I SAID UNTO HIM, SIR, THOU KNOWEST. AND HE SAID TO ME, THESE ARE THEY WHICH CAME OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION, AND HAVE WASHED THEIR ROBES, AND MADE THEM WHITE IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB. THEREFORE ARE THEY BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD, AND SERVE HIM DAY AND NIGHT IN HIS TEMPLE: AND HE THAT SITTETH ON THE THRONE SHALL DWELL AMONG THEM. THEY SHALL HUNGER NO MORE, NEITHER THIRST ANY MORE; NEITHER SHALL THE SUN LIGHT ON THEM, NOR ANY HEAT. FOR THE LAMB WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE SHALL FEED THEM, AND SHALL LEAD THEM UNTO LIVING FOUNTAINS OF WATERS: AND GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS FROM THEIR EYES."—*Revelation* vii. 13-17.

HERE is an illustration of three facts in connection with the human population in heaven.

I.—THEIR EARTHLY LIFE WAS MARKED BY GREAT TRIAL. "*And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What*

are these which are arrayed in white robes? (these which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they?) *and whence came they?* And I said (say) *unto him, Sir (my lord), thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came (come) out of (the) great tribulation.*" An elder in those realms—struck it may be with certain peculiarities in their appearance and worship—puts to John the interrogatory what they were, and whence they came, and the reply he receives is, that they had come out of great tribulation. Tribulation is the common lot of humanity, and ever the discipline of the good. (1) This should teach us contentment under our trials. "No temptation hath happened," &c. (2) This should inspire us with magnanimity under our trials. The tribulations are useful. Like the gales of the mariner, they bear us away from scenes on which our heart is set. The darkest thunder-cloud terrifies but for an hour; it soon passes away and leaves the air clearer and the heavens brighter than before.

II.—THEIR CELESTIAL CIR-

CUMSTANCES ARE PRE-EMINENTLY GLORIOUS. "*Have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*" Look at (1) Their appearance. In white robes, emblems of purity and conquest. (2) Their employment. In a situation of high dignity in the Divine empire. "*They are before the throne, and serve Him day and night*"; indicating the entire consecration of their time and powers. (3) Their companionship. "*He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell* (spread His tabernacle over) *among them.*" They enjoy the intimate communion with the Sovereign of all. (4) Their blessedness. "*They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; . . . and God shall wipe away all tears.*" They are freed from evil, and brought into the full enjoyment of all blessedness.

III.—THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY CONDITION IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO CHRIST. "*They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne.*" Three things are implied. (1) That they were originally polluted.

(2) That the self-sacrifice of Christ has a purifying influence. (3) That their cleansing by this influence had taken place when on earth.

CONCLUSION.—Mark well the “*therefore*” of the text. Why are men so different in heaven to what they are on earth; in character, circumstances, spirit different? Not

because of the priestly services of any sect, nor because of their own intellectual attainments, but because they have have had their “*robes washed in the blood of the Lamb*”; it is because of Christ they are in heaven.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE.—“Let it not be said that Independence and Freedom mean the same thing in the end. They never did : they do not : they cannot. Independence is merely relative and outward : Freedom has its source within, in the depths of our spiritual life, and cannot subsist unless it is fed by fresh supplies from thence. Its essence is love ; for it is love that delivers us from the bondage of self. Its home is peace, from which, indeed, it often strays far, but for which it always feels a homesick longing. Its life-blood is truth, which alone can free us from the delusions of the world and of our own carnal nature. Whereas the essence of Independence is hatred and jealousy, its home strife and warfare ; it feeds upon delusions, and is itself the greatest. It was not until the true idea of Freedom, as not only reconcilable with law and order and the obedience and sacrifice of the will, but requiring them imperatively to preserve it from running riot and perishing in wilfulness was fading away, that the new word Independence was set up in its room.”—ARCHDEACON HARE.

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Isaiah xliii. 1.

(*The Second Sunday after Christmas.*)

EVENING LESSON.

"FEAR NOT: . . THOU ART MINE."

SUCH words as these, and their context also, remind us—

I.—THAT WE BELONG TO GOD. "Thou art mine." Shall we say that here either (*a*) *He authoritatively claims us*; or (*b*) *He condescends to own us*. Either is true. In our filial moods we rejoice in both. "A threefold cord is not quickly broken," and by the verse the text indicates three ties;—we are God's (1) *By creation*; "The Lord that created thee; that formed thee." (2) *By redemption*; "I have redeemed thee." (3) *By the care of individual love*; "I have called thee by thy name."

II.—THAT our belonging to God IS A PLEDGE OF HIS HELPFUL PRESENCE.

He hateth nothing that He has made. Nay, more than that. In all the varied experiences of sorrow and even of torture, His presence is with us. (1) "Through the waters;" these may illustrate cares and calamities that come upon men like a flood.

(2) "Through fire;" this may illustrate the inner in contrast with the outward trials of life; the personal in contrast with the relative. The burning bush is an illustration of many lives in which fires of affliction burn, but which, because of the presence of God, are not consumed.

III.—THAT having this assurance of Divine proprietorship, and this consequent pledge of Divine presence WE SHOULD BE INSPIRED WITH COURAGE. "Fear not." This courage is not because there is no danger, but because to God, our Hope and our Helper, no peril is insurmountable, no enemy invincible.

EDITOR.

Acts vii. 25.

(*First Sunday after the Epiphany.*)

EVENING LESSON.

A TRUE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE.

"FOR HE SUPPOSED HIS BRETHREN WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD, HOW THAT GOD BY HIS HAND WOULD DELIVER THEM: BUT THEY UNDERSTOOD NOT."

THESE words were spoken by the Christian martyr, Stephen, when he was standing before the Jewish council. He was accused of

seeking to overthrow the institutions of Moses, and his mind not unnaturally reverted to the time when Moses himself was an innovator, and repelled by the ancestors of the very men who now taxed Stephen with seeking to change the customs which he had delivered to them.

The passage in the life of Moses which Stephen relates, gives us an example of—

First:—THE TRUE LEADER'S INSTINCT. He went to see his brethren, and to look on their burdens. This is the instinct of a true leader. He does it from policy, for how can the General regulate the marches unless he knows how much the soldier has to carry? Or how can he prescribe methods of lightening burdens unless he knows of what they consist? But not only from policy; from piety and humanity. The true leader's nature comprises the true shepherd's nature: not the robber's or the mere hireling's. Of these, and of all who "climb up some other way," the characteristic is just the reverse. "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

He showed a leader's instinct by striking what might have been a signal blow. When a govern-

ment and people are perfectly distinct, oppression is a simple and direct affair, and can be met by simple and direct blows. The only question is, whether the hour and the man are come. Sometimes it is the hour that tests the man: often even true leaders are not aware of what is in themselves till the turn of things arrives. But here in the case of Moses, the man willed to test the hour.

Secondly: THE TRUE LEADER'S MISTAKE. He supposed the people would understand. A superiorly gifted mind often finds a peculiar difficulty in judging of average human nature, and its calculations may prove to be ill-founded.

Thirdly: THE TRUE LEADER'S AIM. It is to cause unity to be recognised; for what but unity can give the power which it is his nature and his function to wield? Yet Moses says no word about the necessity or advantages of union; but he points out to them the natural ground of union, their common blood. Union based on artificial grounds is not union; and the arrangements and etiquettes designed to maintain it promote incoherency, rather than coherency, and throw society out of gear. Here there was no absence of natural grounds of union. They had two of the strongest: *oneness of race and a common oppressor.*

Fourthly: THE TRUE LEADER'S DISAPPOINTMENT. That his efforts to promote union were in vain. Nothing but pique and personality lay in the answer which he received. "Who made thee a judge and a ruler over us?" How often we find that men submit more readily to class despotism or foreign domination than to wisdom, or genius, or insight inherent in any member of their own order. Does not this jealousy lie at the root of much of the usurped and one-sided rule which is prevalent in this world? But in the case of the Israelites, blindness was combined with jealousy. They saw in Moses only a man of their own order. What deliverance was it possible to effect for a people who could recognise neither the claims of brotherhood nor the gifts of leadership? "His own received him not." Stephen might well recall these circumstances when he was standing before that tribunal of his countrymen, which was perpetrating a still greater refusal.

The repulse was a personal one; but the disappointment was far from being merely personal. To his view, it probably put deliverance off for an indefinite period. His blow had fallen seemingly fruitless; and the cause for the time was lost. How many strokes have passed for random and inco-

herent, only because what should have seconded and surrounded them failed to do so? Rallying to a centre is not the simple natural human matter which it may be thought to be. It is more in accordance with crude human nature that every man should turn to his own way. Union presupposes a surrender of something; and to this, unchastened, uninspired nature cannot bring itself. But, after all, union is brought about. Every honest, well-meaning, disinterested action combines with all other good. And Moses' stroke was not an unseconded one. The blow of the one day was followed by the words of the next; and it gave them force and distinction for all time. And the period may come when it will be seen that to avert or repress tyranny all over the world, it is sufficient that brothers should do no wrong one to another.

L. N.

Isaiah lv. 1-3.

(The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.)

MORNING LESSON.

"HO, EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH,"
&c.

THIS passage tells of

I.—THE BITTER WANT OF SINFUL MEN. The soul wants food. Everything that lives does. *E. g.*, Tree and Body. But the want in

the case of the soul becomes a bitterer hunger than elsewhere. This (a) common *Scriptural figures imply*. (b) *Experience teaches*. "I perish with hunger" is the bitter wail of starving immortals.

II.—THE UNAVAILING EFFORTS OF SINFUL MEN TO MEET THAT BITTER WANT. The "why" here is a remonstrance against the false methods men employ in seeking to satisfy their soul hunger. Man is a worker, and a free worker; but his labour is often for what yields no true wage. It is not "bread"; it "satisfieth not." The markets, the theatres, the highways of public life, the perverted religious observances of mankind all testify to this. Many a soul cries—

"The waters of the world have failed
And I am thirsty still."

III.—THE DIVINE PROVISION FOR THE SATISFACTION OF THIS BITTER WANT.

(1) *There is provision for such want.*

(2) *Such provision can only be obtainable from God.*

(3) *God is earnestly inviting men to seek that provision.* "Ho."

(4) *The Divine invitation is full and free;—"Every one."* "Eat that which is good." "Without money and without price."

EDITOR.

Romans xii. 21.

(*The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.*)

"OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD."

THESE words admit of a wider application than that given them in the text. They embody a principle that is universal. Evil of all kinds, always, and everywhere, must be conquered by good.

I. — THE CHRISTIAN AIM. "Overcome evil." No true Christian can be indifferent about the great evils that fill the world; but merely to regret their existence is not sufficient, he should seek to destroy them, and that wherever they are found; neither age, fashion, nor interest should shield them from his attack. He who does not do this is a traitor. All admit this in theory, but many ignore it in practice. A stranger watching our lives would rarely discover that the destruction of sin was one of our main aims.

II.—THE CHRISTIAN METHOD. "Overcome evil with good." It is important to know how best to work. A good aim is not enough; a good method is necessary. Our text gives us the true method of Christian warfare—"Overcome evil with good." Evil is best overcome by doing, making known, and establishing good, which will then undermine evil, and so destroy it, rather than by the direct

concentration of our attack upon wrong itself. This was Christ's method with those twin evils—war and slavery. He never openly denounced them, but His teaching undermined them, so that, were it fully received, they would be unknown. This was the method of Paul—he overthrew the evils of Paganism by the good of the Gospel message. Let us apply this principle to three forms of evil. (1) *Enmity*. If we meet enmity with enmity we only increase it. Patience will not subdue it. But when we fight with goodness, return good for evil, feed our enemy when he hungers, then we conquer. (2) *Scepticism*. Argument has its place in dealing with the Scepticism of the day; but here, again, the best weapon we can fight with is

the good. Let Christians make known the beauty, grandeur, and adaptability of the religion of Christ, and, above all, let them embody its sublime morality in their lives, and the evil of Scepticism will be overcome. (3) *Sin in the heart*. Some try to cleanse the heart by rigorous watchfulness, constant heart-searchings and painful struggles to crush all sin. The result is usually very unsatisfactory; sin still remains, while a morbid state of mind is often produced. This evil must be overcome with good. Instead of spending so much time in seeking to banish evil thoughts, let men fill their minds with good thoughts, and then there will be no room for what is bad.

BRISTOL

W. H. SKINNER.

“THE BROTHERHOOD OF PURITY.”—“The Brotherhood of Purity” was a sort of Masonic brotherhood, established in the tenth century, for the promotion of virtue on the co-operative system. The greatest caution was observed in the election of members to the lodge, for every member was expected to contribute to its completeness by supplying some individual virtue or quality needed by the others. A theory of intellectual eclecticism governed the body, and *the presence of a vicious member was not to be tolerated* for a moment. The brotherhood was classed in four grades according to the elevation of soul of the various members, the highest being those who were weary of this world and anxiously waiting the severing of the soul from the body.

T. B. K.

Breviaries.

The Secret of Sadness.

"WHY GO I MOURNING BECAUSE OF THE OPPRESSION OF THE ENEMY?"

—*Psalms* xliii. 2.

THIS is the language of David when his foes triumphed over him. Reviewing his position from that far-off place, he poured out his soul in these two Psalms (xlii. and xliii.) and cried, not so much to others as to himself,—“Why go I?” &c. The language of David on this occasion is language that many a Christian might well use. This question would make a fitting starting-point for earnest self-examination. I.—Is it because I am not really FIGHTING against the adversary? Am I not doing my *best*—not waging a good warfare? The history of Israel, both before and after this time, tells of times when they were terribly oppressed. Their enemies humbled them in the dust. In some of these times they did not venture to strike a blow; they hid themselves, and waited, and hoped, and wished for better days, but did nothing. We read how they waited in vain, until at length one or another—a few spirits braver than the rest—rose up and fought manfully, and, in the end, successfully. It was then seen that, but for their own fault, they might have been saved sooner. (*E. g.*, Judges vi. ; 1 Sam. xiv. Revolt of the Maccabees.) Is this our case? Is our condition so caused? Are we mourning, but not taking up the weapons of our warfare? Are we allowing religion to be a sentiment, a dream, and not a hard, stern, real battle with sin? II.—Is it because I am fighting only a PART of the enemy? Prince Rupert, in the battles of Edge Hill and Marston Moor, flung his troopers upon one wing of the Parliamentary Army and utterly routed it; but he seemed never to remember that it had another wing, and the result was terrible defeat. Is that what any of us are doing? It is a possible, nay, a very common course of conduct. There are men who battle bravely *at home*, strive to be gentle, truthful, and upright, but when they go abroad into business or public life they seem different men,—they are hard, selfish, worldly; and there are men who strive to be loyal to Christ in great things—in business and in public life—and who do reflect honour on the name they bear, who

seem to forget to control temper, subdue selfishness, be kind, gentle, and considerate at home. Then there are men who strive against most evil things, who carry all before them like a conquering army ; but they leave some little thing, which seems almost too little to think about, unconquered ; some trifling indulgence—questionable practice—old habit ; they cry of that, “ Is it not a little one ? ” “ Spare it, spare it ! ” And that little thing becomes like a garrison which a conquering army leaves behind unsubdued, a rallying place for the foe ; the enemy comes forth, harrasses the rear, and takes him at a disadvantage. III.—Is it because I am fighting too exclusively MY OWN BATTLE ? Am I forgetting the admonition “ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,”—trying to be safe and happy and holy alone, doing nothing (persuading myself that I have more than enough to do as it is) for others ? and is that the cause of my own leanness of soul ? It may be. When some epidemic disease like Cholera invades a neighbourhood, how do sane men act ? They not only take precautions for themselves, seeing to the drainage and food supply of their own houses, they busy themselves about others ; they take measures to secure their safety also. They do it because the disease is in the air, and no individual can hope to be saved alone. So it is with sin. It is in the air ; it affects business and society ; it touches and colours all the relationships of life. We meet it everywhere ; we breathe it, and all unconsciously our vitality is lowered by it. “ No man liveth to himself,” and if we would save ourselves we must try to save others. The selfish desire to save self and neglect others is at the root of no small part of the mourning we hear of. IV.—Is it because I am fighting too much IN MY OWN STRENGTH ? Am I neglecting prayer and depending upon my own strength of purpose and determination rather than upon Divine help ? Isaac Taylor, of Olney, was a poor man who needed to work hard and long at his engraving to make a scanty living. He was naturally of an irritable temperament, which these circumstances were not likely to improve ; and yet he lived a gentle and even a saintly life. Every day he retired for an hour to a little closet for communing with God. No pressure of business was allowed to curtail this sacred season ; and in the strength he got there he lived a life otherwise impossible. If more Christians acted thus, there would be less mourning, more peaceful consciences, and triumphant lives. Let each ask himself whether any one or more of the causes thus indicated is the true answer to the question of the text.

Pulpit Handmaids.

The Johnson Centenary.

PREACHING at the Temple on Dec. 15, Rev. A. Ainger remarked that a hundred years ago, almost to that very day, Dr. Johnson died in Bolt Court, off Fleet Street. Half his life Dr. Johnson had lived in or close to the Temple. Its courts and gardens were familiar and dear to him, within its church he often worshipped, and the busy thoroughfare bounding the Temple on the north, was to him the most interesting and delightful scene on earth. Among all English notable authors, none, perhaps, was more intimately associated in many ways with the Temple than Johnson, unless it were his dear friend and constant companion Goldsmith. Technically, Johnson was not a Templar, but few men had lived more in the atmosphere of the Temple. The quiet of the place and the activity and noise around it were typical of Johnson's own life, for that life found its best and happiest alternative to the retirement of the scholar in that contemplation of men's busy ways which made another and not less memorable lover of the Temple to shed tears in the crowded Strand for "fulness of joy at so much life." The facts of Johnson's life, continued the preacher, are well known to all of us. As the subject of the most minute and faithful biography in the language, Johnson lives before us for all time in colours that cannot fade. The time has happily gone by when the character and position in literature of this remarkable man could be lightly disposed of by citing half-a-dozen instances of his prejudices or rudeness, or by parodying his peculiarities of style. That famous biography which abundantly illustrates these, is at least faithful in giving prominence to the noblest features of his character, his devoutness and reverence in an unspiritual age, his patience, his indifference to money, his independence, and his large charity. Johnson in his own day had a great reputation for wisdom. Men called him the Sage, and we at the present day are inclined perhaps to look back upon this reputation with something of

distrust, for in so many of the branches in which he specially dealt, we have made such signal advance during the last hundred years. Take, for instance, two out of the three prose works on which his literary reputation justly rests,—the Dictionary and the “Lives of the Poets.” Philology has made enormous strides since Johnson’s day, and the very names of the poets who make up Johnson’s collection, show by omission as well as inclusion how limited was the range of his poetic sympathies, and how unfit he was to measure or understand the loftiest heights of the poet’s imagination. But this did not affect Johnson’s reputation for sagacity, that power of seeing further into the truth of things than other men, which was to him a moral quality. Johnson’s best sagacity, that which made him famous, that which has survived and will survive, however far in philology and in critical discernment and in the freedom and variety of English writing we may surpass him, is eminently a wisdom learned through the practise of the nobler and rarer Christian virtues. His wide reading and extraordinary memory and his gift of humour, unique in its kind, give a special flavour in colouring to his utterances. But the basis of his sagacity rests upon a deeper foundation of moral insight. Johnson was in his generation, and to it, a prophet, and his prophetic faculty, however fettered and confused by taints of bodily and mental disease, rested upon the rock of an unmovable love of righteousness and hatred of sin. His criticisms, his counsels, his reflections never fail to strike down to the roots of things. Once when present at the Temple Church he heard Gregory Sharp praying “for the preservation of our glorious liberties.” Dr. Johnson remarked, “He would have done better to pray against our licentiousness.” The old Tory may seem to appear in this, but surely the true prophet not less. Johnson, in his “Rasselas” and in his poem on “The Vanity of Human Wishes,” was teaching not only what he believed to be true, but what he had himself learnt in painful experience. Happiness, in the vulgar sense, he rarely felt. He was subject to depression, a hypochondria which seldom was altogether absent, a melancholy compounded of many simples, but assuredly not the melancholy of many who surrounded him, not

the melancholy of scepticism, or of any wavering faith in the wisdom and goodness of God's moral government of the world. Johnson's bodily health, coupled with his struggles in early life, made him intolerant of the petty grievances of his neighbours, but few men ever lived with a deeper and more sensitive reserve of compassion. Two final words in the story of "Rasselas" appear to sum up the religious philosophy of Johnson; the one in the words of the Princess, that we are not placed here on earth to choose our life, but to choose our eternity; and the other in the saying of Imlac, "He that lives well in the world is better than he that lives well in a monastery."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Religion and Superstition.

FROM THE "RAMBLER."

"I HAVE lately had a very remarkable dream, which made so strong an impression on me that I remember it every word. Methought I was in the midst of a very entertaining set of company, and extremely delighted in attending to a lively conversation, when on a sudden I perceived one of the most shocking figures imagination can frame advancing towards me. She was drest in black, her skin was contracted into a thousand wrinkles, her eyes deep sunk in her head, and her complexion pale and livid as the countenance of death. Her looks were filled with terror and unrelenting severity, and her hands armed with whips and scorpions. As soon as she came near, with a horrid frown and a voice that chilled my very blood, she bid me to follow her. I obeyed, and she led me through rugged paths, beset with briars and thorns, into a deep solitary valley. Wherever she passed the fading verdure withered beneath her steps: her pestilential breath infected the air with malignant vapours, obscured the lustre of the sun, and involved the fair face of heaven in universal gloom. Dismal howlings resounded through the forest from every baleful tree, the night raven uttered his dreadful note, and the prospect was filled with desolation and horror. In the midst of this tremendous scene my execrable guide addressed me in the following manner:—

"Retire with me, O rash, unthinking mortal, from the vain allurements of a deceitful world, and learn that pleasure was not designed the portion

of human life. Man was born to mourn and to be wretched ; this is the condition of all below the stars, and whoever endeavours to oppose it acts in contradiction to the will of heaven. Fly then from the fatal enchantments of youth and social delight, and here consecrate the solitary hours to lamentation and woe. Misery is the duty of all sublunary beings, and every enjoyment is an offence to the Deity, who is to be worshipped only by the mortification of every sense of pleasure and the everlasting exercise of sighs and tears.'

"This melancholy picture of life quite sunk my spirits, and seemed to annihilate every principle of joy within me. I threw myself beneath a blasted yew, where the winds blew cold and dismal round my head, and dreadful apprehensions chilled my heart. Here I resolved to lie until the hand of death, which I impatiently invoked, should put an end to the miseries of a life so deplorably wretched. In this sad situation I espied on one hand of me a deep muddy river, whose heavy waves rolled on in slow, sullen murmurs. Here I determined to plunge, and was just upon the brink, when I found myself suddenly drawn back. I turned about and was surprised by the sight of the loveliest object I had ever beheld. The most engaging charms of youth and beauty appeared in all her form, effulgent glories sparkled in her eyes, and their awful splendours were softened by the gentlest looks of compassion and peace. At her approach the frightful spectre, who had before tormented me, vanished away, and with her all the horrors she had caused. The gloomy clouds brightened into cheerful sunshine, the groves recovered their verdure, and the whole region looked gay and blooming as the garden of Eden. I was quite transported at this unexpected change, and reviving pleasure began to gladden my thoughts, when, with a look of inexpressible sweetness, my beauteous deliverer thus uttered her divine instructions.

"My name is Religion. I am the offspring of Truth and Love, and the Parent of Benevolence, Hope, and Joy. That monster from whose power I have freed you is called Superstition. She is the child of Discontent, and her followers are Fear and Sorrow. Thus different as we are she has often the insolence to assume my name and character, and seduces unhappy mortals to think us the same, till she at length drives them to the borders of Despair,—that dreadful abyss into which you were just going to sink. Look round and survey the various beauties of the globe which Heaven has destined for the seat of the human race. For what end hath the lavish hand of Providence diffused such innumerable objects of delight, but that all might rejoice in the privilege of existence,

and be filled with gratitude to the beneficent Author of it? Thus, to enjoy the blessings He has sent is virtue and obedience, and to reject them merely as means of pleasure is pitiable ignorance, or absurd perverseness. Infinite goodness is the source of created existence: the proper tendency of every rational being, from the highest order of raptured seraphs to the meanest rank of men, is to rise incessantly from lower degrees of happiness to higher. They have each faculties assigned them for various orders of delight.' 'What,' cried I, 'is this the language of Religion? Does she lead her votaries through flowery paths, and bid them pass an unlaborious life? Where are the painful toils of virtue, the mortification of penitents, the self-denying exercises of saints and heroes?' 'The true enjoyment of a reasonable being,' answered she mildly, 'does not consist in unbounded indulgence or luxurious ease, in the tumult of passions, the languor of indolence, or the flutter of light amusements. Yielding to immoral pleasure corrupts the mind, living to animal and trifling ones debases it; both in their degree disqualify it for its genuine good, and consign it over to wretchedness. Whoever would be really happy must make the delight and regular exercise of his superior powers his chief attention, adoring the perfections of his Maker, expressing goodwill to his fellow-creatures, cultivating inward rectitude. To his lower faculties he must allow such gratifications as will, by refreshing him, invigorate his nobler pursuits. In the regions inhabited by angelic natures unmingled felicity for ever blooms; joy flows there with a perpetual and abundant stream, nor needs there any mound to check its course. Beings conscious of a frame of mind originally diseased, as all the human race has cause to be, must use the regimen of a stricter self-government. Whoever has been guilty of voluntary excesses must patiently submit, both to the painful workings of nature and needful severities of medicine, in order to his cure. Still he is entitled to a moderate share of whatever alleviating accommodations this fair mansion of his merciful Parent affords, consistent with his recovery: and in proportion as this recovery advances, the liveliest joy will spring from his secret sense of an amended and improving heart. So far from the horrors of despair is the condition even of the guilty. Shudder, poor mortal, at the thought of the gulf into which thou wast but now going to plunge. While the most faulty have ever encouragement to amend, the more innocent soul will be supported with still sweeter consolations under all its experience of human infirmities,—supported by the gladdening assurances that every sincere endeavour to outgrow them shall be assisted,

accepted, and rewarded. To such an one the lowliest self-abasement is but a deep-laid foundation for the most elevated hopes ; since they who faithfully examine and acknowledge what they are, shall be enabled under my conduct to become what they desire. The Christian and the hero are inseparable ; and to the aspiring of unassuming trust and filial confidence are set no bounds. To him who is animated with a view of obtaining approbation from the Sovereign of the universe no difficulty is insurmountable. Secure in this pursuit of every needful aid, his conflict with the severest pains and trials is little more than the vigorous exercises of a mind in health. His patient dependence on that Providence which looks through all eternity, his silent resignation, his ready accommodation of his thoughts and behaviour to its inscrutable ways, is at once the most excellent form of self-denial, and a source of the most exalted transports. Society is the true sphere of human virtue. In social, active life, difficulties will perpetually be met with ; restraints of many kinds will be necessary, and studying to behave rightly in respect of these is a discipline to the human heart useful to others and improving to itself. Suffering is no duty but where it is necessary to avoid guilt or to do good, nor pleasure a crime but where it strengthens the influence of bad inclinations, or lessens the generous activities of virtue. The happiness allotted to man in his present state is, indeed, faint and low compared with his immortal prospects and noble capacities ; but yet whatever portion of it the distributing hand of heaven offers to each individual is a needful support and refreshment for the present moment, so far as it may not hinder the attaining of his final destination. Return then with me from continual misery to moderate enjoyment and grateful alacrity. Return from the contracted views of solitude to the proper duties of relative and dependent being. Religion is not confined to cells and closets, nor restrained to sullen retirement. These are the gloomy doctrines of Superstition, by which she endeavours to break those chains of benevolence and social affection that link the welfare of every particular with that of the whole. Remember that the greatest honour you can pay to the Author of your being is by such a cheerful behaviour as discovers a mind satisfied with His dispensations.'

"Here my preceptress paused, and I was going to express my acknowledgements for her discourse, when a ring of bells from the neighbouring village and a new risen sun darting his beams through my windows awaked me."

Suggestions for Science Parables.

All material Nature is but a parable of Spiritual realities.

"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry,
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,
Clear as the sea or sky."

VICTOR HUGO.

THE STORM AND THE SOUL OF NATURE.—"It was that moment of preliminary anxiety when it seems as though the elements are changing into persons, and one is about to witness the mysterious transfiguration of the wind into the wind-god. The sea becomes *Ocean*, its power reveals itself as *Will*; that which one takes for a thing is a *Soul*. It will become visible. Hence the terror. The soul of man fears thus to be confronted with the soul of nature. . . . Chaos was about to appear. The wind rolling back the fog and making a stage of the clouds behind, set the scene for that fearful drama of wave and winter which is called a snow storm." *Habakkuk* iii. 8; *Ps.* lxxxiii. 15; *Ps.* lxxvii. 19; *Ps.* cxlviii. 8; *Mark* iv. 34.

THE SEA AN AVENGER.—"Let us throw our crimes into the sea, they weigh us down; it is they that are sinking the ship. Let us no more think of safety—let us think of salvation. . . . For those who leave intended murder behind them it is an impious insolence to tempt the abyss. . . . True, we were obliged to put to sea, but it was certain perdition. The storm, warned by the shadow of our crime, came on. . . . Let us strive that our souls be not swallowed up before God, for that is the awful shipwreck. . . . Repentance is the bark which never sinks." See *Jonah* i. 6-16.

THE CALM—TREACHEROUS AND DANGEROUS.—"Wind, hail, the hurricane, the whirlwind, these are wild combatants that may be overcome; the storm can be taken in the weak point of its armour; there are resources against the violence which continually lays itself open, is off its guard, and often hits wide. But nothing is to be done against a calm; it offers nothing to the grasp of which you can lay hold." Toplady says—

"Far more the treacherous calm I dread
Than tempests bursting o'er my head."

PARASITISM—ITS ULTIMATE DOOM.—“There is a something which survives deposed princes, and which feeds and sustains their parasites. The remains of the exhaustible sap cause leaves to live on for two or three days on the branches of the uprooted tree; then, all at once, the leaf yellows and dries up, and thus it is with the courtier.” *Daniel* xi. 34; *Prov.* xxviii. 23. “A man that flattereth shall spread a net for his feet.” *Prov.* xxix. 5. “He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.” *Job* xvii. 5.

ENVY—ITS NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES.—“Fresh-blown beauties perfumes for others, are to the envious thorns; of the roses they feel but the prick. . . . Envy excels in exciting jealousy, as the rat draws the crocodile from its hole. . . . Envy is good stuff to make a spy. The spy hunts on others’ account, like the dog; the envious man hunts on his own. . . . He is mean yet proud. It is a fine thing to be a flea on a lion. The noble beast feels the bite and expends his mighty anger against the atom; . . . the lion, humiliated, feels the sting of the insect, and the flea can say, “I have in my veins the blood of a lion.” In *Job* we read—“Envy slayeth the silly one” (v. 2); “Envy is the rottenness of the bones,” *Prov.* xiv. 30; “For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” *James* iii. 16.

PASSIONS DORMANT.—“At the corners of old maps of the world of the fifteenth century, are great vague spaces without shape or name, on which are written these three words—*Hic sunt leones*. Such a dark corner is there also in man. Passions grow and growl somewhere within us, and we may say of an obscure portion of our souls—there are lions here.” The Bible pictures the heart of man as “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” *Jer.* xvii. 9; see also *Matt.* xv. 19.

GOLD—CORRUPTIBLE AND CORRUPTING.—“By friction gold loses, every year, a fourteen-hundredth part of its bulk. This is what is called its wear. Hence it follows that on 1,400 millions of gold in circulation throughout the world, one million is lost annually. This million dissolves into dust, flies away, floats about, is reduced to atoms, charges, drugs, weighs down conscience, amalgamates with the souls of the rich, whom it renders proud, and with those of the poor, whom it renders brutish.” See *Matt.* vi. 19; *Jer.* v. 3; *Hosea* viii. 4.

Reviews.

Publications of Sunday School Union, Old Bailey.

YOUNG ENGLAND. An Illustrated Magazine for instruction and recreation.

CHILD'S OWN MAGAZINE.

YOUNG ENGLAND. This volume is a capital Annual for the young. It has a vast variety of subjects, all of a class to attract, captivate, and improve the young. It has, of course, tales and poetry and pictorial illustrations, puzzles also not a few. Whilst we heartily recommend this volume as a whole, we cannot forbear uttering our protest against the frequent representation made of David as a great saint and a type of Christ. It would be, we think, impossible for any man of common sense to read the account of David as given in the first and second books of Samuel (commencing at chapter xvi. of the first book); 1 Kings, chapters i., ii.; and 1 Chron. xi. to xvi.; and nowhere else in the Old Testament have we any other account of him, and to regard him as any other than a very bad man. The David of what may be called Evangelical orthodox teaching is the mere fiction of a sickly and pietistic imagination, and not the veritable man that appears in the Old Testament biography. We, however, cordially recommend this handsome volume as a gift-book for the young.

THE CHILD'S OWN MAGAZINE is an exquisite production, amidst whose pictures the youngest who cannot read will revel, and in whose simple literature the youngest of those who can read will find delight.

Publications of Wells, Gardner and Co., Paternoster Buildings.

THE CHATTERBOX. By CANON ERSKINE CLARK.

THE PRIZE FOR 1884.

We are glad to find that the "Chatterbox," notwithstanding the numerous imitators and competitors that have arisen, not only holds its way, but is unsurpassed and unsurpassable. What we have said of "Chatterbox" applies to "The Prize." It is an exquisite little volume for children. The illustrations in these two books are admirable, and the reading matter is not only most fascinating but fraught with information on a great variety of subjects.

Publications of Messrs. Cassell and Co., London and Paris.

THE QUIVER, an Illustrated Magazine of general reading.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF ST. PAUL. By F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

LITTLE FOLKS, FOR 1884.

Every year we have called our readers' attention to the "Quiver" and recommended it. This volume is equal to its predecessors. This is saying much. It has the same class of subjects. Its religious discourses are of the same type, not many of them marked by any striking originality, breadth of thought, or depth of insight. Many of the stories are very good, also the biographic and historic anecdotes. It is a handsome volume, overflowing with a vast variety of subjects.

We have already called our readers' attention to the "Life of St. Paul," and commended it to their study. A work that has already obtained such a vast circulation, and has for its author such a distinguished man, requires no recommendation. Those of us who have read such works as Conybeare and Howson, and the unrivalled production of Lewin, on the same subject, will find this work has excellencies and charms all its own. This edition in a cheap form brings the work within the reach of all ministers.

We are glad to find "Little Folks" coming out in an aspect somewhat new, and in a larger form. It has all the old excellencies and many new attractions. There are numerous interesting stories, pretty poems, and pictorial illustrations most exquisite and attractive.

CRUDEN'S CONCORDANCE TO THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT. London : Morgan and Scott.

Cruden's Concordance, which appeared one hundred and fifty years ago, is one of the great books of the world. Dr. Young's Concordance, which appeared a few years ago—a work of prodigious labour indicating immense research and great scholarship—has no equal, perhaps never will. It has all that is necessary ; it is up to the demands and the learning of the age, but its price places it beyond the reach of the multitude. This edition meets that difficulty, whilst it supplies certain deficiencies of the former. It contains a new translation and revision of the Proper Names of the Old and New Testaments, with their meanings in the original languages, by Rev. Alfred Jones, M.A., who has devoted great attention to the subject. Whilst the publishers of this work deserve the thanks of the religious public, the able Editor is not the less entitled to our gratitude for his scholarly and laborious undertaking. This, of course, will in the future be the edition of Cruden that students of the Bible will procure and consult.

THE LAY OF ST. ALOYS. A Legend of Blois, by Thomas Ingoldsby, with Old Letters and New Illustrations. By ERNEST M. JESSOP. London: Eyre and Spottiswode, Great New Street, Fetter Lane, E.C.

The author of the "Ingoldsby Legends" was Rev. Richard Barham, who lived and flourished in the first quarter of this century. He was an intimate friend of the famous Theodore Hook, a minor canon of St. Paul's, a rector and a royal chaplain. He took the *nom de plume* of Thomas Ingoldsby, under which he wrote his numerous Legends, which, in prose and verse, contain sallies of quaint humour, classic travesties, droll rhymes, banter, and ghost stories and mediæval legends. The one before us, "*The Lay of St. Aloys*," is, perhaps, one of the best of the numerous productions of this remarkable man. It is magnificently got up, in old English lettering, on the finest toned paper. It contains on every page numerous exquisite and most ludicrous pictures of Bishops, Monks, Friars, Choristers, and many Ecclesiastics, also pictures of all sorts of things pertaining to Churches of the Sacerdotal order, the crosier, robes, candles, mitre, monuments of the dead, &c. It is really no wonder that a man of genius, with rich humour and a keen penetration into the absurdities and incongruities, though a Canon of St. Paul's, should turn much connected with the ecclesiastical system to which he belonged into ridicule and laughter. This is a splendid book to lay on the table to interest Christmas guests.

LIFE AND OPINIONS OF JOHN BRIGHT. By FRANCIS WATT, M.A.

LIFE AND TIMES OF W. E. GLADSTONE. By EWING RITCHIE. London: Sangster and Co., Paternoster Row.

The enterprising publisher here presents the English public with two volumes which will receive as hearty a welcome as the Christmas volumes which he has for years been in the habit of issuing. The work on *Mr. Bright* contains sixteen chapters, entitled:—Early Years—The Past History of the Corn Laws—Early Parliamentary Career—The Crimean War—Out of and in Parliament—India—Record of Events and Opinions—The Civil War in England—Death of Cobden—The Reform Struggle—Questions relating to Ireland—In and out of Office—Mr. Bright as a Lord Rector—Criticisms and Opinions on Mr. Bright—The Bright Celebration at Birmingham—Recent Events. There are also pictorial illustrations of Mr. Bright's birth-place and residence, the Mansion House, York, Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Cobden, Cobden's birth-place, Sir Robert Peel, Old Manchester, Baron Rothschild, Henry Pease, Elihu Burritt, Milner Gibson, Mr. Broadhurst, Robert Chambers, &c., &c.

The work on *Mr. Gladstone* contains twenty chapters, entitled:—Mr. Gladstone's Ancestors—Mr. Gladstone at Eton—Mr. Gladstone at Oxford—Foreign Travel—Sergeant Wilde—The First Reformed Parliament—Mr. Gladstone in Parliament—Mr. Gladstone in Office—Mr. Gladstone in Opposition—Sir R. Peel's Ministry—The Corn Laws—The Neapolitan Prisons—Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer—Mr. Gladstone Premier—The Beaconsfield Administration—The Bulgarian Atrocities—Foreign Affairs—Irish Land Bill—Mr. Gladstone in the City—Mr. Gladstone's Egyptian Policy. There are also about fifty illustrations of subjects such as Hawarden Park, Gladstone's birth-place, Eton, Etna, Sir R. Peel, Lord J. Russell, Lord Brougham, Tamworth Castle, Lord Aberdeen, Duke of Newcastle, Lowe, Palmerston, Fawcett, &c., &c.

LEISURE HOUR, FOR 1884.

SUNDAY AT HOME, FOR 1884. London: Religious Tract Society, 56, Paternoster Row.

These two welcome serials, like the righteous, hold on their way. Though chronologically they are somewhat aged, yet constitutionally they are in fresh youthhood, their eyes are not dim, nor is their natural strength abated. The "Leisure Hour" contains, amongst a vast variety of subjects, many interesting biographic sketches, a large number of Indian fables, natural history notes, and humorous and instructive anecdotes. There are also plenty of pictorial illustrations, tales, poetry, and music.

The "Sunday at Home" is confined to subjects of a more sacred kind; Biblical scenes, characters, and incidents, religious poetry, pulpit discourses, and Scripture puzzles. It abounds with some very choice coloured illustrations. These works are, however, too well known to require explanation, and too much valued to need recommendation.

THE ROSE OF SHARON; A DRAMATIC ORATORIO. By A. C. MACKENZIE. London and New York: Novello and Co.

This Oratorio is founded on the Song of Solomon; the words have been selected by Mr. Joseph Bennett. The talented Compiler says—"In taking a story from a Canonical Book of the Bible he could not ignore its spiritual significance. He has, therefore, introduced a Prologue suggesting the parabolic character of the drama, and an Epilogue which points its moral." The well-known and accomplished author of the musical composition will heighten his reputation by this beautiful production. Wherever this Oratorio has been performed we understand that it has

met with a very hearty reception. We have no doubt that this edition of the work will obtain what it deserves—a very wide circulation.

JACOB JENNINGS, THE COLONIST. By JANET GORDON.

CARLOWRIE. By ANNIE SWAN.

URSULA VIVIAN. By ANNIE SWAN.

BY STILL WATERS. By EDWARD GARRET. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, & Co.

Here are four tales, which, although specially suited for the young, can scarcely fail to interest and charm the middle-aged and old. We have read each, and have been much interested. They are all about the same size, and each is well illustrated.

JACOB JENNINGS. This story by Miss Gordon reveals a dramatic genius of no mean order. It contains a thrilling account of the adventures of a young colonist in South Africa.

CARLOWRIE, AND URSULA VIVIAN. We have been entranced with Miss Annie Swan's tales, especially that entitled "Ursula Vivian." Every girl should read this book, which will give her true ideas of how life should be used. "Carlowrie" is a simple and pretty tale concerning a Farm House and its inhabitants among the Lothian Folk.

BY STILL WATERS. Mr. Edward Garret has done good work in the production of this very interesting "Story for quiet hours."

To all who wish to give valuable little works to the young at this season of the year, we heartily direct their special attention to these four interesting works from the publishing house of Messrs. Oliphant.

AN OLD STORY OF BETHLEHEM. By the Author of the "Schomberg Cotta Family." London: S. P. C. K., Paternoster Row.

Few Biblical Stories are more interesting than that of Ruth, the great grandmother of David. That story is here told in a very charming way. Though brief, it is clear and comprehensive. Every page breathes the sweet aroma of nature and reality. The pictorial illustrations are coloured, beautiful in their attitude, and life-like in pose and expression.

SOME HERETICS OF YESTERDAY. By E. S. HERRICK, D.D. London: Sampson and Low, Fleet Street.

In this volume we have sketches of Tauler, Wiclif, Hus, Savonarola,

Latimer, Cranmer, Melancthon, Knox, Calvin, Coligny, William Brewster, and Wesley. The author has treated these celebrated characters with great fairness and with literary skill of no mean order. He makes many of the men to live and breathe on the page. His judgment of Cranmer is by no means exalted, yet most truthful withal. He was a man of natural ability, considerable scholarship and information, but, morally, a very small man. Heroism was foreign to his nature. He had not the spirit of the true martyr. He was not only stupid enough to believe in the divine right of Kings, but base enough to worship the office even when occupied by one of the most despicable brutes that ever sat on a throne. This Primate of all England, forsooth, is a creature one cannot but despise. Henry VIII., wallowing in the sty of sensuality, murdering some of his wives and breaking the heart of others, this Primate of all England worshipped as almost a God. The cruelty of "Bloody Queen Mary" we cannot but ascribe in some measure to this man's influence. "There were some questions," says the Author, "that were rankling in her breast that she proceeded to answer as soon as she came to the throne. Who had laboured with tongue and pen, with hand and foot, through England and on the Continent for years to accomplish the dethronement of her mother? Cranmer! Who had officially pronounced that mother a twenty years' mistress, and herself illegitimate—a princess without a name? Cranmer! Who had joined her father's hand in marriage to an upstart of inferior rank, while her royal mother was still living in loyal and loving seclusion? Cranmer! Who had helped her brutish father to break her mother's heart? Cranmer! And who, through all these years, had aided and abetted him in perpetuating the wrongs? Cranmer! Who had officially banished from England the authority and the rites of the Church she loved? Cranmer! Who, to crown the long list of wrongs, had permitted her personal rights to be ignored, and had lent himself to the attempt to put another on her throne, and her hereditary crown upon the head of another? Cranmer! There was no man in the realm to whom she owed such a measure of indignation and wrath."

PRETTY PICTURES FOR OUR LITTLE ONES. By JAMES WESTON.

BIBLE PICTURES AND STORIES. By JAMES WESTON.

THE GIPSY QUEEN. By EMMA LESLIE.

MARION AND AUGUSTA. By EMMA LESLIE.

THE CLOISTER AND CLOSET. By Rev. C. E. STONE. London: S. Partridge and Son, 6, Paternoster Row.

PRETTY PICTURES. This book contains forty-six full-page beautiful

pictures which will delight children, and interesting little tales and sketches of life, vegetable and animal, of children and their parents.

BIBLE PICTURES. This book is by the same author, and the same size, but the pictures and tales are all Biblical. These two volumes will be a delightful present for children.

THE GIPSY QUEEN. This is a very attractive story for the young.

MARION AND AUGUSTA. This little book, by the same authoress, is a capital Sunday School tale, giving the practical development of selfishness and unselfishness, the one is made to appear what it is—beautiful, and the other—hideous.

THE CLOISTER AND THE CLOSET. This little work is a practical treatment of one of the most important functions, namely, meditation.

BENJAMIN HOLBECK. By M. A. PAULL.

THE SCHOONER ON THE BEACH. By Rev. E. RAUD. London: Sunday School Union, 56, Old Bailey.

These two little works are very interesting, well got up, and contain several illustrations.

BENJAMIN HOLBECK. This is a story of the siege of Plymouth in the time of the Civil War. He who begins it will proceed to the close, and that without pause. It is full of information, and written in a most interesting style.

THE SCHOONER ON THE BEACH. What boy will not delight in this story of stirring sea-side adventures?





The
Leading Homily.

THE DUTY OF PRAISING MEN.

“IF THERE BE ANY PRAISE.”—*Phil.* iv. 8.

THERE is one grace of Christian character the excellence of which is little recognised and the cultivation of which is little practised,—that of praising the praiseworthy. Praise is the timely and temperate recognition of the worthiness we witness in our fellow men. It is definitely and clearly distinguishable from *flattery*, which is an immoral ascription of virtue that is not possessed at all, or a careless and culpable exaggeration of the virtue that does exist. The praise of man, or, to use Scriptural terms, the rendering of honour where honour is due, may be a grace which is not easily acquired; it may be one which is attended with a certain danger; but it is one without which no character can be at all complete; and they who neglect its culture and its exercise leave unemployed a powerful weapon which their Creator meant them to use in the interests of righteousness.

1. It may, indeed, be said that *sinful man is undeserving of any praise at all*: that, before he is reconciled to God, he is in a state of abiding condemnation (Jno. iii. 36); and that, as the servant of Christ, he renders so imperfect and even faulty a service as to make him unworthy of commendation. Is he not, when he has

done his best, to say that he is but an unprofitable servant, and to feel that he can never transcend the lines of obligation? (Luke xvii. 10). Is it not true that never yet, by his noblest deeds or by his most patient sufferings, has a Christian man offered any service to his Saviour to which He was not entitled? Truly; yet that does not make it wrong for us to express the pleasure with which we see men striving to do the right, the honourable, the heroic thing: that does not make it inconsistent or inappropriate that we should gladly and fully acknowledge the efforts which we see others are making to acquire that which is difficult, to do that which is sacrificial, to effect that which is beneficent and wise. If the great Heart-Searcher praised kings and prophets as He did in ancient times; if the ascended Lord who "knew their works" commended His churches, as He did in later times; if the hour is coming in which the Divine Judge will say, "Well done" to the good and faithful servant; if the day will come when everyone (who is praiseworthy) will have praise of God (1 Cor. iv. 5), it is certain that we need not be deterred, on the ground of human undeservedness, from offering our approval now.

2. But it may be objected that *fallible man cannot discern where and when praise is due*: that the moral character of our actions depends on motives which are invisible to us, on hereditary inclination which is not measurable by us, on a variety of helpful or adverse influences which we are incompetent to weigh or even to number. This, again, is true, and should be carefully borne in mind. But it is consistent with another and larger truth,—that we are so far fashioned alike that we can and do understand one another, and can form judgments concerning one another's choices and conduct which are approximately correct and substantially just. As a rule, we know when a man is trying "to erect himself above himself" and to live a true and faithful life: we know also when a man is yielding to the lower impulses of his nature, dishonouring himself and injuring his fellow men. And we feel that upon the whole men recognise our integrity and that they detect our want of good faith. "Judge righteous judgment," said the Master; and the command on His part implies the capacity of obedience on ours.

3. But it will be further said that *praise is likely to be seriously harmful to those that receive it*: it will, like the consciousness of knowledge, “puff up” the subject of it. Not necessarily so. Often it positively humbles, for it reminds its recipient of his unworthiness in the sight of God, and brings before his mind those things in which he rebukes himself. No man need refrain, on this ground, from commending another for spiritual services rendered: the true minister of Christ—ordained or unordained—is one who, when thus honoured of man, has the keenest sense of his unworthiness to be the spokesman of Divine truth, the channel of heavenly influence. Very frequently the commendation we receive keeps our minds in a happy and desirable equipoise between exaltation and despair, when, without it, we should sink into a dreary and fruitless depression under the weight of self-reproach and the detraction of our neighbours. There are three positive considerations which show that praise is a duty which we are not at liberty to leave undone.

I.—IT IS ONE OF THOSE FEATURES WHICH CONSTITUTE THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF OUR LORD. Christ praised men freely,—He who is “the leader and perfecter of the faith” (Heb. xii. 2), He who “left us an example that we should follow in His steps.” Words of kind and generous commendation were often on His lips. He praised Nathaniel as the man without guile; He praised Mary for her unselfish devotion to Him when she “wrought a good work on Him;” He praised the widow who offered her two mites for her superior generosity; He praised the Centurion for his unexampled faith; He praised the Syrophœnician woman for her patient importunity; He praised His disciples for their loyal continuance with Him through all His trials (Luke xxii. 28). These are but the instances which happen to be recorded, and they undoubtedly stand for very many more which find no place in the Evangelists’ memorials. We may safely say that it was the *habit* of our Master and Leader to praise the praiseworthy, and if we would be as like Him as we may become, it must be ours also.

II.—IT IS NEEDED TO BALANCE OUR BEHAVIOUR AND GIVE COMPLETENESS TO THE CONDUCT OF OUR LIFE. The actions and

the character of our neighbours are continually coming up before us and challenging our judgment. We cannot possibly refrain from arriving at some conclusion respecting them, from approving or disapproving them. And we cannot be wholly silent respecting them: it is not in our nature to be so. We must speak our mind; and in one direction we all do. *We all blame men*: all parents blame their children when they are negligent or disobedient; all masters and mistresses blame their servants when they fail to give them satisfaction; all buyers blame their tradespeople when they are disappointed with the articles they have purchased; all ministers blame their congregations when they fall short of the mark they may be expected to reach; all congregations blame their ministers when they find imperfections in them. All round the social circle we think it necessary and right *to blame*. We have no hesitation about our rectitude here, though we are quite as likely to be wrong in our censure as in our praise, and are as certain to do harm by mistake or by excess in the one case as in the other. But surely if there is to be any symmetry, any beauty, anything approaching perfectness in our conduct;—if we wish to shun an ugly one-sidedness, an unsightly incompleteness in our life, we must praise as well as blame. We must do that which gives pleasure as well as that which gives pain; we must do that which encourages as well as that which disheartens; we must put some sunshine as well as some shadow into our daily judgments; we must see that, beside the thorns that prick and the plants that shade, there grow in our garden the flowers that yield pleasant fragrance and gladdening beauty.

III.—IT FOSTERS THE APPRECIATIVE AS OPPOSED TO THE CENSORIOUS ELEMENT OF OUR CHARACTER. Many tendencies within and many influences without us nourish the critical faculty in our nature; their effect is to give us a very keen eye for all that is imperfect and unlovely in those around us. We are apt to become unnecessarily and undesirably alive to every fault in their execution, to every blemish in their character. And the result is found in a severity of spirit which betrays itself in a censoriousness of tone, and even in a hardness of feature, imperceptible, perhaps, to ourselves, though painfully apparent to every-

body else. Every true disciple of the Master, every faithful follower of the Lord of love, will shrink from such a course and such a goal. But a wise habit of life will correct this tendency and save us from this evil end. For it is not more true that our character determines our actions than that our actions modify our character. And if we sedulously cultivate the habit of praising men we shall acquire an appreciative disposition; we shall gain quickness of perception to discern all that is fair and admirable in human lives; we shall look with a kindlier eye on our fellow-men. Our prevailing tone will be sensibly and happily affected by this Christian habit. Less of austerity and more of benignity will enter into the structure of our character; it will be found that, in this, as in every other instance, the doing of that which is both just and amiable will not only sweeten the breath but beautify the spirit of our life.

IV.—IT IS ONE IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF USEFULNESS. No doubt the *condemnation of wrong* has done incalculable good to human society, but has not the commendation of right done at least as much for the welfare of mankind? It is as true to-day as it ever was that the traveller along the highway of human life who will not disrobe himself of his cloak of folly for all the angry winds of censure, will be persuaded by the kindly sunshine of wise encouragement. There may be many souls that have been injured by being overpraised, but how many are the souls that would have struggled on when they stopped and fell, that would have fought out the battle instead of laying down the weapon, that would have triumphed nobly instead of failing miserably, if they had received a few words of reviving praise; if they had not been condemned for the halts and stumbles into which their feebleness betrayed them, but commended for the progress they had laboriously and honourably made! As a moral force that helps human souls along the path of life, that contributes to spiritual worth and admirable achievement, a sprinkling of well-timed praise is worth a tempest of blame. Parents, employers, teachers, pastors, all who are in authority should remember that, on the one hand, there is nothing so daunting, so damaging, so certainly destructive of good, as the constant, unvarying, unrelieved

trituration of blame: it is a mistake with those of any age, but it is sheer cruelty and mortal injury to the young: and they should remember, on the other hand, that there is nothing so inspiring and so helpful as the wise recognition of a pure endeavour to do what is right and worthy,—no matter what be the scene or sphere in which the attempt is made. Words of timely and measured praise are the refreshing and reviving shower which saves the drooping plant from withering away and preserves it for fragrant flower and delicious fruit in future days. If we do not cherish and cultivate this Christian grace, we shall be unlike our Master in one prominent feature of His character; our lives will lack the symmetry and proportion which they should possess, and we shall leave unused a power for holy usefulness which may do inestimable good in hearts that we love the best, as well as in many a fellow-traveller whose path we casually cross in the journey of our life.

We may sound one note of warning: let no man be *too reliant on the praise of man*. The breath of human commendation is like the fragrance of the way-side flower to the tired traveller; it is pleasant and refreshing, but it must not be relied upon as a main source of strength. We must draw our spiritual resources from something higher than the human. Better than the praise of man is the approval of our own conscience; and better far than *this* is the good pleasure of God, the “well done” of the observant and approving Saviour. God save us from the condemnation and the doom of those who “receive honour one of another and seek not the honour which cometh from God only.” Let us live and labour, “not as pleasing men, but as pleasing God,” as those “whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Let us count all praise to be delusive and destructive which is not the human utterance of the Divine thought; let us eagerly aspire to have it testified of us that, day by day, in every scene and sphere in which we move, we are pleasing God; let us labour,—let us patiently and prayerfully endeavour that, whether present with our Lord in His heavenly home, or living here in His absence, we may be accepted of Him.

BRISTOL.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.

Germ of Thought.

The Two Voices.

“THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING, THAT SPEAKETH BETTER THINGS THAN
THAT OF ABEL.”—*Heb. xii. 24.*

THE writer is pointing out in the immediate context the advantages those he addressed enjoyed in having become Christians. They had come to a dispensation that instead of inspiring slavish terror, justified filial trust, to the possession of principles the most sacred and sublime, of fellowships the highest and most ennobling, of anticipations the brightest and loftiest; and—as if to remind them of the foundation of them all—he tells them they had come to “Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant”—and to what was confirmatory of it—“the blood of sprinkling,” of which he affirms that it “speaketh”—alluding to Gen. iv. 10—“better things than that of Abel.” In what does this superiority consist?

I.—The voice uttered by the blood of Abel speaks of *martyrdom*. The voice uttered by the blood of sprinkling speaks of *propitiation*. Cain and Abel were both worshippers—the one an accepted, the other a rejected worshipper. Why? Heb. xi. 4 gives the reply. Wherein did the greater excellence of Abel’s sacrifice consist; in its ritual, or in the spirit of the worshipper? In both. There was that in Abel’s offering that Cain’s lacked (Gen. iv. 4). Presumably—for otherwise how can Abel’s procedure be accounted for?—there had been a Divine revelation previously given enjoining on those who would draw near to God the presentation of animal sacrifice as an acknowledgment of personal demerit, and as a foreshadowing of what was to be more fully declared subsequently—that “without shedding of blood is no remission.” This revelation Abel accepted with all humility; against it, Cain—though as well acquainted with it as his brother

was—rebelled. Obedience characterised the spirit and conduct of Abel, influenced as he was by faith. Disobedience the spirit and conduct of Cain. Abel carried out his conviction; he was a witness for what he believed to be the truth. His was the *mind* of the martyr, and, as one having that mind, his death speaks to us; an utterance this not to be lightly esteemed. But how much better the utterance of the other voice. It tells us of One who did not simply encounter death in conflict with His foes, laying down His life as an evidence of His loyal adherence to His faith, but One who “was wounded for our transgressions,” &c.

II.—The voice uttered by the blood of Abel speaks of the *wrath of man*. The voice uttered by the blood of sprinkling speaks of the *love of God*. Cain, offended that his brother’s offering should have been met by a reception the opposite of his own, “was very wroth and his countenance fell.” To his proud spirit expostulation appealed in vain. The secret flame of jealousy rose into settled hatred, and, time and place being suitable for his purpose, he rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him. Pass, in thought, from the spot called the field to the place called Calvary, where they crucified Him. Listen to the Voice that addresses you from thence, telling of Divine love displaying itself in a form most tender and gracious, most forceful and fruitful.

III.—The voice uttered by the blood of Abel speaks of *punishment*. The voice uttered by the blood of sprinkling speaks of *pardon*. The commission of the crime was followed by inquiry. The inquiry was met by an answer distinguished alike by falsehood and insolence (Gen. iv. 9). The examination is continued. It is pressing and personal, made—as the record in v. 10 shews—in order that the culprit being self-convicted the avenger of blood might pronounce sentence on him and the fitting penalty be inflicted (Gen. iv. 10, &c.) Judgment then, judgment without mercy, it is of that the voice issuing from the blood of Abel speaks. The utterance of the other voice, how different and how much better. Let the Saviour be its Interpreter. “Shed for many for the remission of sins.” Let the apostle instruct us

as to the blessing secured by it to those that are accepted in the beloved: "In whom we have redemption," &c. (Eph. i. 7).

IV.—The voice uttered by the blood of Abel speaks of *banishment* from the Divine presence. The voice uttered by the blood of sprinkling speaks of *admission* thereto. The immediate sequel. Sentence having been pronounced is recorded (Gen. iv. 16). By the presence of the Lord it has been suggested we are to understand—seeing Cain could not elude the notice of the Omnipresent One—some locality, possibly in the outskirts of Eden, where some special manifestation of that presence was vouchsafed—perhaps by a radiance of supernatural brightness flashing from the flaming sword (Gen. iii. 24). However this may be, whether the phrase is susceptible of an interpretation of this kind or not, one thing is clearly suggested by it: *separation between the offending and the offended*. Now, as to the blood of sprinkling, can you think of anything more unlike this than that of which it speaks. Has not God devised means by which His banished ones may not be expelled from Him? Saith it not: "Ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh"?

LONDON.

J. F. POULTER, B.A.

Balaam's Soliloquy.

"ALAS! WHO SHALL LIVE WHEN GOD DOETH THIS?"

—*Numbers xxiv. 23.*

BALAAM was one of the few men outside the Jewish nation to whom were given the spirit of prophecy. Nothing is recorded of his early life, but as kings had been taught to trust in his word and bow to his spiritual authority, it is fair to credit him with faithfulness to his high vocation. His supreme trial came to him in the full strength of manhood, when he ought to have been able to give full proof of his ministry; but, alas, the worm

of covetousness had done its work and he could not withstand the fascination of Balak's bribes. He proved that a "Seer" is not necessarily a doer, nor an inspired man a faithful man, and that in the supreme hour of trial, which comes to every man, knowledge is no match for lust; the graceless nature must go down. While the vision of Christ and redemption was before Balaam's eyes, he thus spoke with himself—"Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" Here we have—

I.—THE CERTAINTY OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES. Unfaithful Balaam knew that the faithful God would fulfil His gracious purposes, the Star would arise, the King would come—even Jesus.

II.—THE CONTINUITY OF DIVINE ACTIVITY. Balaam not only felt God working within him, but saw Him working around him for the good of Israel, and before him, in the future, maturing and carrying forward His plans without pause, uncertainty, or possibility of failure. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

III.—THE BREVITY OF INDIVIDUAL LIFE. The people were busy digging graves in those days and have been ever since. Generations come and go. Our fathers, where are they? We shall soon depart and our children take our place. Another year speeds to its close, and all our years will soon be gone. Only God remaineth; of His years there is no end. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

IV.—THE CHANGEFUL SCENES OF HUMAN HISTORY. When God began to prepare for the advent of His Son, only two sad, sinful hearts were in the wide world. But families, tribes, nations innumerable have come and gone. How full of pathos is the rise and fall of empires! How full of hope and joy the changeless work of Divine redemption.

V.—THE SAD WAIL OF UNSANCTIFIED KNOWLEDGE. Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day; Balaam mourned—"Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?" He had no part in Christ. He knew the Lord's will but did it not. In view of the future, how such knowledge stings.

VI.—THE MISERY OF AN EARTH-BOUND SOUL. Balaam knew he must die, yet clung to the earth. He loved the wages of unrighteousness and sold himself to do evil, taught Balak to cast

a stumbling-block in the way of Israel, for sordid pelf. The thought of having all he loved wrenched from his grasp by the hand of death was maddening. What a contrast to Paul, "I have a desire to depart and to be with Jesus, which is far better" than life in this world.

Are we like Balaam? In knowledge, yes. We know that God is carrying forward His purposes, and that He will give to all men according as their works shall be.

Are we like him in spirit? Do we cling to the things of this perishing world? Let the passing away of another year remind us "this is not our rest." What are our thoughts of God? Does it gladden or sadden us that He is ever working in this world? What are our thoughts of the future—of eternity? The end of all prophecy is at hand. Are we willing to stand in our lot at the end of days? Have we the blessed assurance, because Christ liveth, we shall live also? O, brethren, at the close of this dying year, trim your sails afresh, catch the favouring breezes of heaven, sail with the current of grace into the harbour of eternal rest, and you shall live when God has done all His work in this world.

KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL.

JOSEPH WILLCOX.

Responsibility and Privilege.

"UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN, OF HIM SHALL BE MUCH REQUIRED."—*Luke* xii. 48.

I.—UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY. Daniel Webster was once asked what was the greatest thought that had ever entered his mind? "My personal responsibility to God," he answered. It is a foundation truth in Christian life. We are "stewards," we have to render an "account." It is God's universal law. The clouds carry their moisture to give it to the earth, the earth gives it out to man in the beauty and use of its products; and as the bird's

song is not for itself only, and the glory of the cloud ministers to man's happiness; so every gift, power, joy man has ought to be used for others, and for its use the possessor must give an account.

II.—VARYING RESPONSIBILITY WITH VARYING PRIVILEGE. It is a simple matter of fact that gifts and powers vary. To some God gives "one talent," to some "five talents," and from those who have most, most is expected, and the heavier is the penalty of failure. Public opinion would condemn a Prime Minister who had betrayed his trust, more heavily than it would a minor Government official who had erred in the same way. We expect more from a child well trained, than from one badly trained, and we condemn failure in either in proportion to our expectations. That is God's law. There is no dead level in His judgments. Our light, our advantages, our gifts will be considered in them.

See some applications of the principle to—

1. *Wealth.* Men enjoy the privilege; they do not so readily recognise that as it grows their responsibility grows, because they are considered by God as "stewards." If the Ruler of India used its resources for his own interests, we should impeach him. The man who uses his wealth only for selfish ends, stands impeached at God's bar.

2. *Any special faculty.* Some natures are wonderfully gifted with influences that seem magnetic in their subtle power. There are attractive, joyous temperaments that act on one as a bright spring day. Such men form centres wherever they are. Their power is a sacred gift, and woe to them if it be used badly. Specially heavy is their accountability to God.

3. *Special openings for Christian service.* All have these openings, but some especially so. They are always meeting the unsaved, or are placed in such circumstances that loyalty to Christ's law cannot fail to make a great impression.

4. *The English people.* We are not on the level of a nation only lately become Christian. Our past history stands as a constant testimony to the Gospel. As dwellers in a land so highly favoured by God, and with such abundant religious

privileges we surely shall have more required from us than will be required from the people of any other country.

5. *The children of Christian parents.* Their traditions, training, early associations are all for good. As surely as from an Arab horse you expect a speed you do not from a cart-horse, so will God require from children of Christian homes far more than from the untrained Arab children who run wild in the streets of our towns. For them to refuse Christ is to sin against full light, and to make a choice for which they have *no* excuse.

Let us learn to look at life in the solemn light of a judgment ever going on. We cannot recall the wasted past. But we can, at least, determine that every gift and power we have shall, in the future, *be used by us* "as they that must *give account.*"

SLOUGH.

FRANK SMITH.

Blind Bartimæus; or True Faith.

"AND THEY CAME TO JERICHO; AND AS HE WENT OUT OF JERICHO WITH HIS DISCIPLES AND A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE, BLIND BARTIMÆUS, THE SON OF TIMEUS, SAT BY THE HIGHWAY SIDE BEGGING," &c.—*Mark* x. 46-52.

RESPECTING Christ, the text suggests three thoughts: viz., that He (1) approaches; (2) compassionates; (3) helps man. Saving help is conditioned by faith. "He that believeth shall be saved," &c. (*Mark* xvi. 16). The text exhibits true faith as—

I.—ACTIVE IN THE USE OF MEANS.

1. It is *quick to learn*. "And when he heard that it was Jesus," &c.

2. It is *prompt in the use of opportunity*. "When he heard . . . he began to cry out."

3. It is *personal in its request*, that is, done in person. Substitution is impossible here. "Began to cry out, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

4. It is *right in its attachment*. "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." True faith is also—

II.—PERSISTENT IN THE USE OF MEANS.

1. It is *irrepressible*. "Many charged him that he should hold his peace, but he cried . . . "Thou Son of David," &c.

2. It is *unalterable in the character and aim* of its petition. "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

3. It is *importunate*. "He cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David." True faith is also—

III.—SUCCESSFUL IN THE USE OF MEANS. "Jesus said, Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole; and immediately he received his sight." Successful because—

1. *Obedient* to the Divine call. "Jesus stood still . . . and he (Bartimæus), casting away his garment, came to Jesus."

2. Because *candid* in the acknowledgment of necessity, "Jesus answered and said, What wilt thou," &c. The blind man said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

3. Because *actively and persistently reliant* on God. "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Let us remember an inoperative faith is dead being alone.

NORMANTON.

PHILIP T. YARKER.

Orthodox Love.

"LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NEITHER THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD. IF ANY MAN LOVE THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM."—1 John ii. 15.

"LOVE not the world, neither the things that are in the world." This is one of those injunctions we have found it so difficult to understand; as difficult, *e.g.*, as it is to come, when weary, to find rest, by taking on one's shoulders the yoke of Christ; as difficult as it is to rejoice when, in our struggle to do right, we fall into divers temptations. And yet this injunction has such intrinsic

worth that its observance absolutely decides whether a man shall enter heaven or for ever be excluded.

"Love not the world." But we know that *man is compelled, by some secret impulse, to love some one or some thing.* And this in itself is a very splendid thing; especially when one considers the worth of the loves of life. For life without love would be very poor. If there were no love to brighten up the way of life, how gloomy our experiences would be. But "human love is itself a pearl of great price." It "enlarges, enriches, and ennobles life. What force it evolves! What beneficent ministries it conducts! What patient heroism and severe self-suppression it inspires."

There is such a variety of objects for a man's love, that it is difficult to fix a standard of orthodoxy for love,—difficult to attain to a fixed ideal, high enough to satisfy God, low enough for the weakest to attain. We may safely say that the world in bulk has fallen below this high ideal. Recall the idle standards in vogue now-a-days. Sentiment wrongly named love. Noble, too, as affection is, it can only be, at most, the *child* of love. We have yet higher to go before we come up to the full idea of orthodox love. And what is that? The concentration of the soul's best energies on that one object that is higher than anything that earth can give,—on that Being that is best and noblest, highest and truest, on nothing short of that which has truth for its essence,—ON GOD! And how few there are who strive for that as the supreme end of life's energies. And yet this alone is an orthodox love.

But one man seeks to attain a good position in life, as life's supreme end. Another, eminence in learning. A third, political distinction; and so on. While I admire men who thus make the most of their opportunities, I am not able to shut my eyes to the fact that danger threatens when men determine to set out in life resolved on one achievement, God being distinctly absent from it all. We cannot help fearing lest the head should rule the heart, whereas it ought to be the reverse. For if once the head gets the mastery, there is the danger lest the endeavours to attain this object in view should render a man liable to forget his higher

possibilities, his nobler obligations. So much is this the case, that I believe that men are apt to concentrate their whole energies upon a certain object without a consideration as to whether it is worth all the risk and trouble that will accrue.

"Love not the world." Perhaps there never was greater need to urge this than there is to-day. Think what an absorbing world this is. The old jog-trot style of our grandfathers would rouse within most of us the very demon of impatience. Who would endure the stage-coach to-day, when the train is at our service for a mile of space in a minute of time? How few mariners would endure a voyage in the ancient sailing-tubs, now that the papers record the passage of a steamer across the wide Atlantic in about six days? The post is scarcely fast enough for us; and we shall have men, some day, trying to eclipse the electric telegraph for speed. Were there ever such days for pleasure? Our bill-posting stations are crowded with advertisements showing men what they may do with their leisure. Was ever business competition what it is to-day? Does a man go from Leeds to Manchester at a jog-trot, and over a glass of beer chaffer for a £10 bargain? It is a busy age, and a very absorbing one,—an age of steam, electricity, hubbub, excitement, drive and dash. All men seem go-ahead. All are eager. And if, when evening comes, you sit down with them for a chat, it is "shop" from first to last. But this ought not to be. And so the modern interpretation of the text is arrived at,—Do not be absorbed with the world. Put it aside now and again. Do not let it be your all in all. Love it; but let your supreme desire, your aim, your ambition, your truest love be concentrated on something infinitely higher,—on God and His righteousness.

When the "white-haired apostle" lived, the men were much absorbed in worldly things and seemed to have little thought for God. There were so many things to think about that God came off with second-best attention, even at the hands of some of the Christians. It was a day of wars, fightings, tumults, luxurious greed; "the world and the interests of the world assumed a complete preponderance in the thoughts of all men; the fear of God seemed to have been banished into the far background of

life." What Farrar said in writing upon the epistle of St. James may be adapted to St. John's case: "It is in the love of the world that he sees the source of all enormities, and it is against this love of the world, it is against this tainted scrupulosity and mitred atheism that he speaks trumpet-tongued." That love of the world had brought men very low. They descended to the paltry meannesses which a Christian ought to hold in abhorrence. The Christians loved the world, consequently they loved what was in it; loved "braggart self-confidence," loved scandal, loved the sensual, acquired an insatiable greed for gold, cared more for some "shibboleth" than for the sacred name of Christ. And hence they were brought face to face with orthodox love, and hence this verse came into the epistle,—*"Love not the world,"* &c.

Some people forget that the world has its claims upon them. They forget what an all-round principle duty is. "Duty, be it in a small matter or a great, is a duty still; the command of heaven, the eldest voice of God. And it is only they who are faithful in a few things who will be faithful over many things; only they who do their duty in everyday and trivial matters who will fulfil them on great occasions." And, if we fulfil not our obligation—for duty is an obligation—we please not God.

There is a degree in which the world must have our best attention. In every chapter of daily life we should never lose sight of the fact, that whatsoever a man has to do should be done thoroughly.

But here the text asserts itself. All this is right enough; this ought to be, this must be. But something stands before it,—not a candidate, but a persistent claimant for supremacy,—the love for God!

It seems but a natural transition to the thought, that men make too much of the world's claims, and so need warning. And why is this? Because religion is obnoxious. You want to rule yourself, and religion says, "No, God must rule you." "Then I do not want God; I love these things better." Then the love of the Father is not in you.

In the text the old error is struck at, that we can serve God and mammon. We cannot do that. Duty and mammon are two

different things. Duty is an attribute of heaven; mammon is the devil's right hand man. Do your duty, but pray do not imagine that you are so to be absorbed as to forget your Master. If you do forget Him, you are a slave to mammon. And how, then, can the love of God be in you?

I know how enticing this world is. But in weighing the consequences of worldliness, as against those of godliness, I begin to ask,—Is it not a wonder that men can go so far as to love the things of the world and utterly forsake God? even those who say, they are His people? And yet ingratitude, spite of the superhuman goodness displayed, is the curse of all the ages. But why? I cannot understand it, try what I will. I only know this, that we love the world, we still go on loving it, and presently the dreadful truth is apparent—the love of the Father is not in us.

I talk to men—not to cravens; to women also, whose hearts are tender—possessed of all the grace of true humanity. But why is it that this spiritual aberration so far afflicts our race that the majority of men and women do not turn the full force of their influence for God; and that, by first making room for God's love in their individual hearts? I believe it to be—not so much because of desperate wickedness, as from sheer indifference. You have gone out into the world; you have found its literature entrancing; you have been bewitched with its music; you have been amid the full hubbub of the exchange; you have gone among the whirling machinery; you have got into gay company; and you have found all these to be delightful. But you have not gauged them comparatively,—God, and the benefits and pleasures of religion being in the comparison. Hence your indifference, your heterodox love. Your sense of manliness, your sense of justice, your higher capability of discerning what is lovely and of good report, will surely make you turn round boldly to say—“This shall go on no longer: as for me, I will serve God, I will give Him His due,—my heart's best love and service.”

ALBERT LEE, F.R.G.S.

GOMERSAL, LEEDS.

Thomas, the Doubter.

"BUT THOMAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, CALLED DIDYMUS, WAS NOT WITH THEM WHEN JESUS CAME. THE OTHER DISCIPLES THEREFORE SAID UNTO HIM, WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD. BUT HE SAID UNTO THEM, EXCEPT I SHALL SEE IN HIS HANDS THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND PUT MY FINGER INTO THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND THRUST MY HAND INTO HIS SIDE, I WILL NOT BELIEVE," &c.—*John* xx. 24-29.

ALMOST every variety of character and temperament found its representative in the little band here called "the twelve." There was not one amongst them all that Christ did not know how to deal with. The way in which He dealt with Thomas, the doubter, the man who is the type of such an innumerable company in these days, is the subject brought before us in this passage. Review the story told in these verses, and notice—

I.—HOW GENTLY CHRIST DEALT WITH THIS DOUBTER. His dealing presents a marked contrast to the way in which His professed followers have usually dealt with those who have been troubled with doubts which they have ventured to express. The Church has too often met the questionings of troubled spirits with hard words, with harsh conduct, with sentence of excommunication, with the dungeon, the rack, and the stake; and when these have been no longer at its command, as is happily the case to-day, it has met doubt with pity, contempt, or anathema. The doubter has been shunned, he has been a marked man, and in many ways has been made to feel himself a black sheep, and the result has too often been either that men have been driven to take refuge in a hollow, insincere, hypocritical repetition of words void of life, or else they have been driven into the arms of unbelief. It was not thus that Christ met the doubt of Thomas—a doubt which had to do with one of the essential articles of the Christian creed, and a doubt, too, which was expressed in no halting, timid, or measured phrase. He spoke no hard word, and uttered no threat. The Lord needed no such weapons, which are the weapons of the weak. But He *met* the honest doubt of His disciple, He set proof before him—"Reach hither thy finger," &c.

In thus dealing with doubt, our Lord has done two things—(1) Lifted a load from the heart of every man who cannot see eye to eye with his fellows—whatever others may say or do, Christ does not cast them out of His heart. (2) Given an example to those who are not troubled with doubt of the spirit they should exhibit. They may not always be able to remove it as He did, but they can always deal gently.

When we look at the narrative again we may find a hint of the reason *why* Christ dealt thus gently. It was because—

II.—THE POSITION OF THE DOUBTER IS ONE THAT CALLS FOR SYMPATHY. It is the position of less blessedness. “Because thou hast seen Me,” &c., v. 29. No man is more to be envied than he whose faith is untroubled, over whose soul no storms of doubt ever sweep. His faith is its own unspeakable reward. And, on the other hand, no man more needs sympathy than the man who is harrassed by fears, misgivings and doubts, who longs for a faith that will not shrink whatever may come, but whose cry has ever to be, “Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.” His doubt robs him of a thousand joys and racks him with a thousand pains. It comes in between him and God when he would pray. It gives him the feeling of being but a straw upon an eddy in the stream, instead of the calm assurance that all things are working together for his good. It paralyses his tongue when he would speak, and palsies his arm when he would work for Jesus. The honest doubter often looks with hungry eyes and a weary heart at those whose faith maintains the even tenour of its way. He longs for a share of their peace and rest. He envies them, as the struggling thousands envy their prosperous and well-fed neighbours.

We are learning to feel sympathy for the struggling poor. Well would it be for the Church and for all men if the people of God would only feel sympathy for those who are struggling, often in consequence of peculiar temperament or unfortunate circumstances, with doubt. It may help us in this direction to notice—

III.—THAT DOUBT, THOUGH LESS BLESSED IN ITSELF, LEADS AT LAST TO A HIGHER FAITH. That is written on the face of this

narrative. We can imagine the agony of bitter disappointment through which Thomas had passed when he made up his mind that his Lord was no more—the feeling of utter loneliness that would creep over him. But once his doubt was removed, his heart uttered itself in a cry of faith stronger than any that had ever yet passed the lips of any of his fellow-disciples. Peter had spoken the highest faith hitherto when he had said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” But now Thomas exclaims, “My Lord and my God.” And this has ever been the history of honest and reverent doubt. It has led to new views of Christ, lifted Him to a higher place in men’s hearts and given Him a mightier influence over their lives. “Doubt,” said Sir William Hamilton, “is the beginning of philosophy.” It has been the forerunner of every advance in science and it has led to the larger, truer and worthier thoughts of God that prevail to-day. One illustration may be given. A change has come over the thought and teaching of the Church of all sects and parties in our own day. Instead of thinking of Him as a Sovereign, absolute and hard, it thinks of Him as a Father—“the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”—and how came the change? Men like McLeod Campbell ventured to doubt, to brave the censures of the Church, to go back again to the Bible and read it for themselves. Like Thomas, they saw and heard Jesus, and rose with a new faith.

The way may be hard and rough, but it leads on high. It has been well said, “The saints of to-day were the heretics of yesterday. The men to whose deeds we look back with gratitude and veneration, and whom we truly regard as the reformers of their age, have, in every case, been regarded by that age itself as the disturbers of tranquillity and contrivers of innovation.”

Let those who may be troubled with doubts, or who cannot repeat the current creed, take courage—let them draw near to Christ and He will not only, in His own time, answer their doubts, but will make them the stepping-stones to a higher and firmer faith. And let those who are untroubled deal gently, lovingly, and wisely with their less favoured brethren

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Rich by Fraud.

Chapter v. 4-6.—“BEHOLD THE HIRE OF THE LABOURERS WHO HAVE REAPED DOWN YOUR FIELDS, WHICH IS OF YOU KEPT BACK BY FRAUD, CRIETH : AND THE CRIES OF THEM WHICH HAVE REAPED ARE ENTERED INTO THE EARS OF THE LORD OF SABAOOTH. YE HAVE LIVED IN PLEASURE ON THE EARTH, AND BEEN WANTON ; YE HAVE NOURISHED YOUR HEARTS, AS IN A DAY OF SLAUGHTER. YE HAVE CONDEMNED AND KILLED THE JUST ; AND HE DOETH NOT RESIST YOU.”

THESE words, as we have already seen reason to believe, were addressed to the wicked rich men of the apostle's day who “oppressed” the members of the Christian Churches and “blasphemed that worthy Name by the which they were called.” At first sight it does seem strange that the condemnation of such men, uttered as if in personal address to them, should be delivered not in their hearing, but in that of those whom they oppressed. The denunciation occurs in a letter written to Christians, to believers in Christ : why then such words addressed to them ? The strangeness disappears when we remember these two things ; *first*, that the speedy overthrow of their oppressors is given as a reason why they should be patient : be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord : be comforted in this that oppressions and persecutions are not to last for ever, the oppressors are to be spoiled, the persecutors are to die ; *second*, that the denunciations of doom against the unbelieving rich men were to be taken as warnings of mercy by believing rich men, that the latter by the example of the former might take heed to themselves lest their hearts should be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and so *that day* come upon *them* ! “Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not highminded,” &c. (1 Tim. vi. 17 and 10).

The apostle has nothing to say in itself against a man being rich ; he assumes, as Scripture everywhere else assumes, as one of

the elementary conditions of human society, that there must be rich and poor, that industry, honesty, prudence must lead to the

possession of riches, riches that are righteously the man's own who has earned them. The apostle has nothing to say against this, it is not wrong in itself to have many possessions, but it is terribly dangerous

to have them; who that knows anything of the deceitfulness of riches, of the innumerable temptations to which rich men are exposed, both from without and from within, would dispute it?

"They that *will* be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in perdition and destruction." You are not such? Yes, but look at those who were such and who were of like passions with you. You

are not such? Yes, but have you not the same nature, the same tendencies, the same liability to be overcome by the same desires?

"Be not high-minded but fear, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall, the love of money is a root of all evil."

It may be that even true Christian men may be the better of overhearing the denunciations of the sins of wicked rich men; the selfish hoarding and the as selfish spending which inevitably bring their own retributive miseries, when the very rust of the gold and silver becomes a witness against them and eats their flesh as it were fire. And so in the hearing of Christian men and for their warning the apostle utters this most terrible condemnation of the wicked rich men *of all generations*: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you: your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten, your gold and silver is rusted and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together in the last days."

There are these three things to be noted in connection with the riches of the wicked rich men: first, where they got them; second, what they did with them; and third, what they thereby brought upon themselves.

First: Where they got them. "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth." Kept back by fraud, kept back by

fraud for years, so that the fields themselves were the gain of
 Rich through fraud; field was added to field and land to land,
 fraud. because year after year the hire of the labourer had
 been kept back. We shall get but a very superficial under-
 standing of the instance which the apostle here adduces, and of
 the similar instances of modern times, if we think of these men
 as acting, as they are here said to have done, only on one occasion,
 at one reaping time only; as if at one harvest only they had kept
 back the hire of the labourer. The thing was a common thing
 with them, they had practised it for years; there were always
 plenty of poor needy men and women ready for the scantiest
 wages to reap down their fields, and these scantiest wages they
 had always made scantier still. Year after year they had kept
 back or screwed down the hire of the labourer; had set poor
 half-starved men and women into pitiful competition with each
 other, to work for just as little as would keep them in life, and
 then when the work was done had taken advantage of some flaw
 or incompleteness to keep back part of the pitiful hire! And so,
 year by year, they grew rich and added field to field and land to
 land out of the hire of the labourer which they kept back by
 fraud.

I am perfectly well aware there is not a more difficult subject
 than that of capital and labour, the adjustment of work and
 wages, especially in these days of the infinite complications and
 ramifications of trade and commerce, where one branch of industry
 is so intricately bound up with another, and where a strike or a
 lock-out will paralyse not one but many industries. What is to
 be the standard of wages for work done? How is the hire to be
 determined? Is it simply to be according to supply and demand?
 Is a thing worth what it will bring, and is this the ultimate
 principle in buying and selling; get as much for your own as
 you can, give as little for his as you can? Or is there not some-
 thing else, which even the spirit of the world has some inkling
 Give & Take, of when it speaks about "give and take"? I am
 the perfectly well aware of the overwhelming difficulty
 Golden Rule. of the subject; but surely Christianity has some-
 thing to say about it, surely Christianity has some light to cast

upon it, and if this light were carefully and honestly followed, surely the difficulty would be lessened? "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"! Suppose *this* Christian principle, incarnated in Christian men, vital and energetic in their business transactions, were to oppose itself to the godless competitions of the present day: suppose Christian men were to make, not a mere bowing acquaintance, but a bosom friend, a confidential counsellor of this principle, and to refuse to make money where it forbade: suppose in every transaction the golden rule were the vitalising principle, would there not be some approach to the solution of the difficulty, to the fair adjustment of work and wages, where the hire of the labourer would not be kept back by fraud? Yes, but a vast portion of the difficulty remains, that which stares us everywhere in the face,—the numberless unchristian men who will not act upon the Christian rule, who refuse to see in their fellow-man anything else but a tool for carrying out, at the least expense to themselves, their selfish ends. Doubtless this is a great, a portentous difficulty; but, again, what are Christian men going to do with it? Are they to say it is so vast that it is impossible to cope with it, that it is of no use to set themselves against it, and that the only thing that can be done is just to do as others do and to let things adjust themselves? Again, what about Christianity? What about the living words, for all time, of the ever-living Christ: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"? Are these words to be tossed aside as unfit for the work-a-day world, well enough as a text for a Sunday homily, but too ethereal for the rough work of the week-day? Religion is religion, and business is business! Wealth gained in contravention of the golden rule is wealth gained by fraud, it is wealth gained by keeping back the hire of the labourer, it is wealth on which it would be the veriest mockery to say the blessing of God could rest. "Woe be to him, saith the Lord, that useth his neighbour without wages." "I will be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages." "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped

Religion is
religion,
business is
business.

down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth : and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

I know I have not solved the difficulty : I know I have pointed out where the solution of the chief part of the difficulty lies :

The solution. and if Christian merchants, buyers and sellers, masters and workmen, would but keep the golden rule, would disputes be continually carried to the bitter end, would there be this incessant need, here for a strike and there for a lock-out; if Christian love formed a part of Christian business, would Force be so often called in to settle with its heavy hand disputes which, but for the want of Love, would never have occurred? There are thousands of cases that are so remote that it is impossible to apply directly the Golden Rule. It is true; but this case which lies at our hand, which is not remote, but which we ourselves are initiating, we can apply the golden rule to it, we can baptize the transaction in the name of righteousness as between man and man, in the name of the just and the merciful God! If we do not, if we fall back on the plea that we are unable to trace the intricate ramifications of business, and, by depressing the wages to the very lowest point at which men can possibly be got to do the work, or by a stingy hardness squeeze down the price of articles of purchase for a miserable saving, leave it to the so-called law of supply and demand; then *we*, too, take our place beside the wicked rich men of the apostle's day, who more openly wicked, but not more really, kept back by fraud the hire of the labourers, the cry of which hire, let us depend upon it, has not ceased in these days to enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. "He shall judge the poor of the people: He shall save the children of the needy and shall break in pieces the oppressor, He shall deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also and him that hath no helper" Let this suffice for the modern rendering of the apostle's words when he tells where and how the wicked rich men of his day got their riches; and before we consider further what they brought upon themselves thereby, let us look for a little while at what they did with the riches they got by fraud.

Second: Briefly, they spent them in luxurious living, upon their own self-indulgence, upon themselves, as the apostle charges it upon them, "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton: ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter." They lived in pleasure, it was a round of pleasure with them from day to day and from night to night. Like the rich man in the parable, they were clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and every night as it came round had its special entertainment, its new pleasure. "Whatsoever their eyes desired they withheld not from them: they restrained not their hearts from any joy." They lived in pleasure, in self-indulgence, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; they nourished their hearts, gave their hearts to this kind of thing, set their hearts upon it till there was a vehement craving for some new pleasure, all the old ones being used up, the appetites too dulled and sated to be gratified with anything less than something fresh. They lived in pleasure.

This is the great temptation to which the rich are exposed, it is the besetting sin of the wealthy to make their wealth minister to mere self-pleasing, self-indulgence, self-ease. It is so natural to indulge self; here are ample means for it at command: why should there be physical exertion, there is the carriage, and the coachman is at hand! Why should there be mental exertion, the toil of the hand or of the brain? Is there not here every result that toil of every kind can ensure? "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry: thou hast much goods laid up for many years." And so the man sinks down into a mere lover of pleasure till he becomes its slave, living in a round of excitement that it taxes all his wealth to keep up; the veriest slave that ever was dragged whither it would by an outraged nature, living in pleasure and dead while he lives.

The picture is an extreme one: yes, but it is just the extreme to which many that are on the road to it never reach, just because they do not have ample enough means at their disposal. If all the pleasure-lovers had the wealth that can buy all things, should we not see more portentous repetitions of the old-world luxury

than we even now behold; if it were not for the blessed curse of labour should not our world be worse than it is? Let riches be gained by fraud, let it be the hire of the labourer that is kept back, and in the very abandonment to self-indulgence, of which this fraud is but a part, men will give themselves to the pursuit of pleasure till heart and soul shall be sunk into it, sense will rule over the spirit, the sensual will usurp the spiritual; the man will be shattered, the soul will be lost. The temptation of the rich man is to a life of pleasure, and if he yields to it, that will inevitably follow which the apostle here says did follow: "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, ye have been wanton, ye have condemned, ye have killed the just." Indulgence in pleasure has a hardening, God-forgetting, God-defying influence upon a man; there is nothing that will so soon dry up the springs of mercy toward man, of reverence toward God. A self-indulgent man becomes a cruel man, a God-defiant man. He is filled, his heart is exalted, he lightly esteems, he raises himself proudly against the Most

**The natural
history of the
rich
blasphemer.**

High. It is not a natural thing for such an one to imagine that God will treat him as He treats men of low degree; when He does treat them thus they are amazed, they are offended, they blaspheme.

We sometimes wonder that men can blaspheme God: let men disregard the rights of their fellow men, and proceed to a life of self-indulgence, and it will be the natural, the inevitable result that when they are thwarted they will murmur, defy, blaspheme.

It is but a further part of this natural and inevitable result that they should condemn and kill the just. These stand in their way: they are a rebuke and an offence to them, their lives of righteousness call forth the feeble testimonies of conscience, which have not yet been altogether suppressed within them; if then these men were out of the way the witness of conscience would not be heard.

**Further
result.**

"Give me by-and-bye John Baptist's head in a charger." "Ye have lived in pleasure and been wanton, ye have condemned and killed the just."

"And he doth not resist"; meek and lowly the just one whom

the wicked rich condemns and kills, like that Just One he owns as Master, does not resist. But there is an eye that sees and a hand that records the wickedness. The cry of it has ascended to heaven, it has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and He will make inquisition for blood. It does not alter the fact that *it is He who makes* inquisition because He does it in indirect ways, because He merely lets the wicked eat of the fruit of their own doings, because He secretly brings it about that in the course of His providence the wicked oppressors are cast down and destroyed. "Though hand join hand in iniquity the wicked

The mills of
God may
grind slowly.

shall not go unpunished." "The Lord is not slack to carry out His purposes as some count slackness."

The impieties and blasphemies of men bring down sure retribution. The wicked rich men may live in pleasure and be wanton, they may nourish their hearts, but it is in the day of slaughter; even now the word has gone forth against them; it is the very eve of their destruction, in an hour when they think not, in an hour which has already struck, they will be cast down from their eminency and there will be none to lament them, they have nourished their hearts in the day of the vengeance of the Lord, in the day of slaughter.

Where they got their wealth, *what* they did with it, and *what* came of it; so would we sum up this word of the Lord.

Tender and conscientious regard for the rights of our fellow-men; a high-toned life, which refuses to have anything to do with pleasure except to use it; a life that submits itself sweetly

Practical.

to the ways of God and never knows what it is to

be tempted to murmur against them; a life which gives itself freely to the service of others, ministering, rather than being ministered unto. We are all rich enough, the poorest among us, to be tempted away from a life like this, and we all of us need, now and again, the lesson here so terribly taught us, that self-indulgence, blasphemy, and murder are of one kin; that it only needs the first step to lead on to the last. Let the lesson we carry away be self-denial, reverence for God, and love for our fellow-men, and the message of the apostle for to-day will bear its blessed fruit in our lives.—Amen and Amen.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Praterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

No. XIX.

Soul-Silence.

"AND WHEN HE HAD OPENED THE SEVENTH SEAL, THERE WAS SILENCE IN HEAVEN ABOUT THE SPACE OF HALF AN HOUR. AND I SAW THE SEVEN ANGELS WHICH STOOD BEFORE GOD; AND TO THEM WERE GIVEN SEVEN TRUMPETS. AND ANOTHER ANGEL CAME AND STOOD AT THE ALTAR, HAVING A GOLDEN CENSER; AND THERE WAS GIVEN UNTO HIM MUCH INCENSE, THAT HE SHOULD OFFER IT WITH THE PRAYERS OF ALL SAINTS UPON THE GOLDEN ALTAR WHICH WAS BEFORE THE THRONE. AND THE SMOKE OF THE INCENSE, WHICH CAME WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS, ASCENDED UP BEFORE GOD OUT OF THE ANGEL'S HAND. AND THE ANGEL TOOK THE CENSER, AND FILLED IT WITH FIRE OF THE ALTAR, AND CAST IT INTO THE EARTH: AND THERE WERE VOICES, AND THUNDERINGS, AND LIGHTNINGS, AND AN EARTH-QUAKE. AND THE SEVEN ANGELS WHICH HAD THE SEVEN TRUMPETS PREPARED THEMSELVES TO SOUND."—*Revelation* viii. 1-6.

THIS portion of the dream of John, like other portions, has Jewish elements of thought brought into strange and grotesque combinations. In dreams there are no new objects or elements of thought or emotion, but old ones brought

into unique forms by an un-governed imagination. Whilst they are evermore difficult, if not impossible to interpret, they are at all times available for the illustrating and impressing of truth.

The words may be fairly

taken to illustrate SOUL-SILENCE. "*There was (followed) silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*" That is, silence for a time. It is suggested—

I.—That Soul-Silence often FOLLOWS GREAT EXCITEMENT. The opening of the seals, the unfolding of the wonderful dispensations of the Divine government up to the close of the world's history, must have excited the feelings and strained the faculties of the spectators to an unusual intensity. The soul lake was no longer without a ripple, it was heaved into swelling surges. It is ever so in soul life, after great tumult there comes a calm. This is always and pre-eminently the case with the genuinely faithful and holy. From the storms of remorse, secular anxieties, and social bereavements, the soul of the genuinely Christly rises into a "peace that passeth all understanding." In truth, in the case of all regenerate souls, great excitement is often the condition of peace and tranquility. It is not until the storms of moral conviction become so terrible that the spirit cries out, "Lord, save or

we perish"; that the Omnific voice, "Peace be still," will take effect, and there comes a "great calm." Blessed silence this! How grand is such a silence. It is the highest gift of man, nay divinity itself.

"How grand is silence! In her tranquil deeps
What mighty things are born!
Thought, Beauty, Faith,
All good;—bright Thought, which
springeth forth at once,
Like sudden sunrise; Faith, the
angel-eyed,
Who takes her rest beside the heart
of man,
Serene and still; eternal Beauty,
crown'd
With flowers, that with the changing
seasons change;
And good of all kinds. Whilst the
babbling verse
Of the vain poet frets its restless
way,
In stately strength the sage's mind
flows on,
Making no noise:—and so, when
clamorous crowds
Rush forth,—or tedious wits waken
the senate-house,—
Or some fierce actor stamps upon
his stage,—
With what a gentle foot doth silent
Time
Steal on his everlasting journey!"
Barry Cornwall.

The words suggest—

II.—That Soul-Silence is often FOUND ABSORBING WORKSHIP. "*And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven*

trumpets," &c. Here begins a new series of visions. The seven trumpets follow the seven seals, and this series extends to the close of the eleventh chapter. The "*seven trumpets*" are given to the seven angels or ministers that stand in the presence of God. But it is not with these seven angels or messengers that we have now to do, they will engage our attention further on. Our concern at present is with the angel connected with the altar,—"*the angel that stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer (add) it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*" This symbolical representation of worship is derived from the Jewish temple, and it may illustrate to us the fact—

First: That the prayers of saints on earth are of great practical interest in the spiritual universe. (1) They are offerings that are acceptable to its Supreme Ruler. "*And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up*

before God." True prayer is acceptable to the Infinite Father. (2) In rendering them acceptable to God His highest spiritual ministers are deeply engaged. Here is an angel standing towards the altar with a golden censer, receiving incense that he might give it "*with the prayers of all the saints.*" Elsewhere, in numerous passages of Holy Writ, angels are represented as rendering spiritual assistance to good men. May they not be constantly doing so by inbreathing those heavenly thoughts that will inspire the soul with the holiest devotions? Notice—

Secondly: That the prayers of saints on earth exert an influence on the things of time. We are told "*the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were (followed) voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.*" The prayers have gone up and the sprinkling of the ashes earthward symbolise their effects on the earth. What convulsions, what revolutions the prayers of the saints have effected on this earth ere now, and what

they effect now they will continue to do.

Now in the midst of all this devotion there would seem to be a period of silence; the profoundest hush, the deepest silence of the soul are found in worship. Here all its faculties work harmoniously, and all its sympathies flow as a deep river without a ripple on its surface. "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him." The realisation of the Divine Presence can never fail to hush the soul into profound tranquility, and in this tranquility its grandest possibilities germinate and grow. "Silence," says an illustrious thinker, "is the element in which great things fashion themselves together, that at length they may emerge full-formed and majestic into the daylight of life which they are thenceforward to rule." Notice—

III.—That Soul-Silence often SPRINGS FROM HIGH EXPECTANCY. "*And the seven angels*

which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

And as the angels raised their trumpets to their mouths ready to blow, a breathless expectancy would be excited. In earnest waiting there is generally silence,—waiting for the last breath of a friend, waiting for the verdict of a jury which decides the deliverance or the destruction of a human life. Holy souls that now witnessed the scene of the trumpets about to utter a blast felt that great things were coming, that stupendous events were rolling up on the wheels of Providence, and there was "*silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*" What wonderful things are before us all! Were we all earnestly waiting for these things, waiting for the "manifestation of the sons of God," waiting the advent of Him who is to wind up the affairs of the world, how silent should we be!

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.



No. XX.

The "Seven Trumpets."—The Revolutions of Matter and Mind.

"THE FIRST ANGEL SOUNDED, AND THERE FOLLOWED HAIL AND FIRE MINGLED WITH BLOOD, AND THEY WERE CAST UPON THE EARTH: AND THE THIRD PART OF TREES WAS BURNT UP, AND ALL GREEN GRASS WAS BURNT UP," &c.—*Rev.* viii. 7; chaps. ix. and x.

WE take these verses, extending from the seventh verse of the eighth chapter to the end of the tenth chapter together, because they all refer to the "*trumpets*," and are records of a portion of John's most wonderful dream. A dream can be recalled, narrated, but seldom, if ever, rightly interpreted, it is generally, perhaps, uninterpretable. Pietistic simpletons and speculative pedants have propounded their interpretations and are still doing so, and what literary rubbish is the result. But though a dream may be incapable of interpretation, it can generally and usefully be used as an illustration of great truths. Thus we endeavour to use all these mysterious and multifarious visions that John had in Patmos. This vision serves to illustrate—

I.—SOME OF THE WONDERFUL REVOLUTIONS THROUGH WHICH OUR WORLD IS CONSTANTLY PASSING. After the sounding of each of the seven trumpets, what a series of marvels was evolved. There are two classes of marvel here—

First: Those in the *material* sphere. As the first four seals were introduced by the cry of, "Come," it has been observed the first four trumpets are followed by judgments on natural objects, the earth, the sea, the rivers, the lights of heaven. What followed the blast of the first trumpet? "*There followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*" "Trumpets," says Moses Stuart, "the usual

emblems of war and bloodshed, are chosen as emblems of the series of judgments now to be inflicted." Does the language here literally refer to some physical events that will befall this earth? From the character of the whole book, which is metaphorical, this is not likely. But events of an astounding character are suggested as occurring on this earth. After this the second trumpet sounded, and "*as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood.*" The words suggest the idea of some volcanic mountain discolouring the ocean so that it appears as blood, destroying a great portion of the creatures that lived in its depth and that floated on its waves. Then, with the sounding of the third trumpet, another terrible event occurs. "*And there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters,*" &c. The greater part of the rivers that roll over the earth, and the wells that spring from

beneath were embittered and poisoned, and many of the human race expire. When the fourth trumpet sounded the heavens are terribly affected. "*The third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was (should be) darkened,*" &c. But all the terrible events that followed the blasts of these four trumpets seem only preparatory for some more terrible judgments that were to follow. "*And I beheld (saw), and heard an angel (eagle) flying through the midst of (in wind) heaven, saying with a loud (great) voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of (for them that dwell on) the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which (who) are yet to sound.*" Whatever particular revolutions the blasts of the four trumpets here refer to—if any—one thing is certain, that great changes are taking place constantly in those regions of matter mentioned here—the earth, the waters, the heavens. *Geology* shows this. What our earth is to-day, its moun-

tains, its valleys, its rivers, and its oceans, as well as its animal and vegetable productions, are the outcome of changes that have been going on through countless ages. Nature is constantly building up and pulling down. "The mountains falling come to naught," &c. *Astronomy* shows this. The telescope discovers shattered planets, stars that, perhaps, shone brightly once in our heavens, also new orbs and comets. All things are in a state of flux and re-flux. According to Peter, all the changes that have been, only tend to a greater change. "The day of the Lord shall come, as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt," &c. What is the practical lesson to be drawn from all these tremendous revolutions? "Trust in Him who liveth for ever."

There's nought on earth that does not
change,
All things are shifting on the stream;
Whatever comes within our range
Seems just as fleeting as a dream.
There is no rest but in Thy Word,
No settled hope but in Thy name;
Root Thou our souls in Thee, O Lord,
For Thou art evermore the same.

The other class of marvels suggested here are—

Secondly: Those in the *spiritual* sphere. There are three more trumpets sounded which have been designated *woe trumpets*, and their blasts seem to introduce wonderful things in the spiritual domain. That there is a spirit-world is too universally admitted to require proof. It comes to our credence, not merely as a matter of philosophic reasoning, but as a matter of consciousness. This spirit world, of which each human being is a member, as well as the higher order of intelligences in the universe, though invisible and impalpable, is ever active and all-influential, the spring and sovereign even of all material forces and phenomena. What is matter but the creature and servant, the effect and evidence of spirit? Great and mysterious changes in the spirit world seem to follow the sounding of the FIFTH trumpet. Moral evil appears (1) In forms alarming. "*I saw a star fall from heaven (from heaven fallen) unto the earth: and to him was given (there was given to him) the key of the bottomless pit (the*

pit of the abyss)," &c. A messenger from heaven, like a bright star, descended and exposed the region of moral evil, he opened the "*bottomless pit*." Moral evil is indeed a pit. (a) It is fathomless, no one can explain its origin and its countless intricate ramifications, it is the "mystery of iniquity." (b) It is consuming. It is like a "*great furnace*." In whatever spirit moral evil exists, it burns, it gives pain, and works destruction. (c) It is obscuring. "*The sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit*." The passions and thoughts which sin generates in the spirit mantle the moral heavens in gloom. How often is this bottomless pit covered up in the soul, hid alike from self and society. Thank God heaven sends a messenger, like a star, from heaven to open it and to enlighten it. Do not let us look for this bottomless pit beneath us, or anywhere external, it is within us, if sin be in us. Moral evil appears (2) In forces terrific. "*And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was*

given power," &c. Orientals dread an advent of locusts as one of the most terrible visitations, grass, trees, plants of all description fall before them. The locusts here sketched are of an order the most terrible. A modern writer describes the locusts here as "malicious as scorpions, ruling as kings, intelligent as men, wily as women, bold and fierce as lions, resistless as those clad in iron armour." These awful forces that go forth amongst men to inflict torture and ruin were (1) All in connection with the "*bottomless pit*." They were, so to speak, bred in the depths of that moral pit and became the servants of that pit. Whatever inflicts pain on humanity is forged in the depth of that bottomless pit. "Whence come wars?" &c. (b) They tended to make life intolerable to man. "*In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die*." Death is universally regarded as the greatest evil, but such is the state of misery here that it is sought as a relief.* How often is the life of a man rendered intolerable

* See *Homilist*, Vol. VI., page 348.

because of his sins, and he has recourse to the razor, the rope, the river, or the poison. From the "*bottomless pit*" of our own sins rise those tormenting fiends that render life intolerable. (c) They were under the direction of a controlling agent. "*And they had a king over them* (they have over them a king), *which is the angel of the bottomless pit* (the angel of the abyss)," &c. The meaning of the words "Abaddon," and "Apollyon," both in Hebrew and Greek, is destruction. All these locusts—in other words, all the forces that torment humanity—are inspired and directed by one great spirit, the spirit of destruction, which goes to and fro through the earth like a lion seeking whom it may devour.

Greater and more terrible changes in the spirit-world seem to follow the sounding of the SIXTH trumpet. In this second "woe" the spirit of destruction takes a wider sweep. It goes forth from the four parts of the earth, it increases the number and the tenour of its messengers. "*Two hundred thousand thousand,*" a countless number, and they appeared

as horses with heads of lions, panoplied with fire, and breathing smoke and flame. By this greater destruction is wrought amongst men, it strikes down a third part of the race. Thus ever the agencies of torture and ruin that visit man working in connection with the "*bottomless pit*" of sin, multiply in numbers and magnify in their malignant proportions. The trial that gives pain to the sinner to-day may be only as an insect, compared with the trial that, like a lion, may torture him to-morrow. So long as the "*bottomless pit*" remains within, torturing fiends will increase in number, and augment in malignant passion and strength.

More strange changes in the spirit-world we find following the sounding of the SEVENTH trumpet. Before the blast of this seventh trumpet, however, there is the advent of another wonderful messenger from heaven. This messenger is robed in a mystic cloud, a rainbow encircling his brow, his face bright as the sun, his feet like pillars of fire, having in his hand a "*little book*." He seems to take

possession of the whole world, plants one foot on the sea and the other on the earth, breaks forth with the voice of a lion, and his utterances were followed by seven thunders, from which a voice out of heaven sounded, saying, "*Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.*" Again this wonderful angel or messenger from heaven, surrounded with all this mystic grandeur, whilst standing on the earth, lifts up his hand to the heavens and swears "*that there should be time no longer.*" After this the seventh trumpet sounds, proclaiming that the mystery of God was finished.

In this tenth chapter three things are powerfully struck upon our attention.

First: A *proclamation of the end of time*. "Time shall be no longer." Time is but limited duration. What is time to man on earth becomes eternity to him when he quits it. It is but a mode of being. In truth, whenever a human spirit rises from the material to the spiritual, from the particular to the universal, time with him is no longer, he

is free from all its limitations. He moves no longer on a little river or creek, he is afloat on the immeasurable ocean.

Secondly: *The communication of a new revelation*. What was contained in this "*little book*" that had not appeared before? Something vital to man's interest. Such Divine books or rolls are constantly coming to us. They come to man in every day's experience, in true thoughts, and in spiritual intuitions.

Thirdly: *The personal appropriation of truth*. The angel said, "*Take it and eat it up.*" Divine truth is not something for intellectual speculation, it is not something for memory, but diet for the life. It must be transmuted into the moral blood and sent through the heart into every fibre of our being.

These "*seven trumpets*" then, suggest and illustrate those revolutions which are everywhere going on, not only through the material, but through the spiritual states of being. In sooth, those that occur in the material are but the results and symbols of those which are transpiring in the great world of mind.

In the inner world of soul what revolutions are constantly going on in every man's experience. Big schemes like mountains burning with fire cast into the sea, bright stars of hope and promise falling from the firmament of the soul, fire and smoke issuing from the "*bottomless pit*" of evil within, smoke that obscures all that is bright, terrible and tormenting forces, like armies of locusts, devouring every budding leaf, and, with a scorpion's sting whose virus rankles in all the nerves of the heart, so that men sometimes seek death and cannot find it. "*Voices and thunders.*" Strange shapes with "thunderous voices" in the heavens. Ah, me! these changes are no dreams, they are neither visions of the day or the night, they are the great realities of the spirit-world. The vision serves to illustrate—

II.—THE SPIRITUAL PERSONALITIES BY WHICH, UNDER GOD, THESE REVOLUTIONS ARE EFFECTED. Here are seven angels with their seven trumpets. That there are, in the great universe of God, countless spiritual existences, varying

endlessly in faculty, position, force, and occupation, admits of no question by those who believe in the divinity of the Scriptures. It is here suggested that to these may be ascribed all the changes that take place in the history of our world. Is it not more rational to trace all these changes to the agency of such spiritual personalities than to what scientists call the laws and forces of nature? The force of motion is in the spirit, not in matter. Matter is inert, it has no self-moving energy. Or, further, is there anything more unreasonable that a high order of spiritual existences should work all the changes we see in earth, and sea, and sky, than the fact that all the products of civilization are the results of the agency of man? Is it not the human spirit, acting through its physical organization, that has covered the earth with architectural buildings, not only piled up the huge cathedrals, castles, palaces, and countless public edifices, but also innumerable residences of every size and shape? Was it not the spirit in man that constructed the bridges, that span

broad rivers, tunnelled through huge mountains a way for mighty oceans to meet and mingle, covered every sea with the fleets of nations, transformed wildernesses and deserts into fertile meadows, vineyards, and gardens, constructed engines to bear men over sea and land almost with lightning velocity? If the human spirit has worked and is working such wonders as these, is there anything unreasonable in supposing that a higher class of spirits can direct the winds, kindle the lightnings, launch the thunders, roll the planets, and heave the ocean? Manifestly not. The universe teems with spiritual personalities, and matter everywhere is the creature, the symbol and servant of spirit.

The dream suggests two things concerning the work of these spirits.

First: Their work is *departmental*. Each had his own trumpet and each produced his own results. The same trumpet was not used by all. This seems to be the Divine plan. Each living creature endowed with activity, from the tiniest to the

greatest, has its own sphere and scope for action. One cannot do the work of another. It is so with men. In all temporal enterprises men themselves act upon this principle; the master mind in manufacture and commerce, gives to each man his part, and this is the plan of God with us all. To each man He has given a mission, and that mission none can rightly discharge but himself. The higher spiritual existences it would seem act in this way. In the material department, it may be, one has to do with the management of the winds and stars and all the inorganic spheres. To another class is given the management of life, vegetable and animal. Thus, too, it may be in the moral realm. "He giveth His angels charge over us": some to instruct the ignorant, some to console the sorrowful, some to strengthen the wavering, some to encourage the feeble and oppressed. It is suggested—

Secondly: Their work is *gradual*. All the trumpets do not sound at the same time, and from the first to the last numberless ages might intervene. The great Maker and Manager

of the universe works out His great plans by what appears to us slow degrees. He is in no haste, He has plenty of time at command. How gradually this earth progressed from chaos to its present condition. How gradually the human race advances in knowledge, in civilization, and in morality. How unlike our method. If we have a work on hand, the more important we deem it the more impatient we are to realize its accomplishment. The sense of the brevity and uncertainty of life impels us to this haste. But "one day with Him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Does not this teach us to be *concerned more with the moral character of our work than with its results?* Our question should be, is it right, not, what will be the issue? The results will not appear in our time, not for ages on, it may be. A good act is like an acorn dropped into good soil, it will require countless ages fully to develop itself. In the motive is at once the virtue and the reward of all labour. Does it not also teach us *to be patient in well-doing, to be hoping*

ever? Our work, if right, is Divine, and if Divine it cannot fail. "Be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." The vision serves to illustrate—

III.—THE GRAND PURPOSE TO WHICH ALL THE REVOLUTIONS ARE DIRECTED. All the revolutions here referred to have a bearing on the minds of men, breaking the monotony of their sinful condition, rousing their fears, so terrifying them as to make their existence so intolerable that they sought death as a relief. And then it is stated that a new revelation from heaven is given them,—a "*little book*" that was to be appropriated. Moreover, it is stated that the grand purpose was the finishing of the "*mystery of God.*" And what is that mystery but the moral restoration of mankind?

It is a glorious thought that all the changes that take place in the universe are for the benefit of souls, that all is moral discipline. Nature is a grand school in which the great Father makes His children "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." "Lo, all these things

worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." Evil is not an end. Good is the end, and evil is ever rushing to it like streams and rivers to the ocean world.

The evils of this world, like the furious storm that spreads devastation over sea and land, will one day die away in a clear sky and a pure atmosphere, and leave the world all beautiful and bright.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.



THE VISION OF GOD.—“In referring to our Lord’s declaration, that the pure in heart shall see God, I remarked that the converse also is true, and that they who see God must be pure in heart. In fact every impurity is like a cloud spreading before our spiritual eye, and blotting out God from our sight. Thus it is only by purity of heart that we can attain to seeing God, while it is only through faith, whereby we are enabled to see God, that our hearts can be purified. This is one of the dilemmas of perpetual occurrence, when an idea is subjected to the operation of the understanding, which breaks it up into parts, and contemplates the parts under the category of succession, whereas in themselves they are one without a before or after. Unless God dwells in our hearts and hallows them with His presence., they cannot be otherwise than impure ; yet, unless they are pure, God cannot dwell in them.”—ARCHDEACON HARE.

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

1 Cor. ix. 24-27.

THE EPISTLE.

(*Septuagesima Sunday.*)

FROM this passage we gather such lessons as the following—

I.—THAT THE LOWER OCCUPATIONS OF OUR LIFE SERVE AS A PARABLE OF THE HIGHEST. Here the apostle is using the two games of Greece familiar at that time, the race and the wrestle, as an illustration of important truths he would teach the Corinthians concerning the Christian life. Probably, few parables of Christian life could have been more clearly understood and keenly appreciated than these national pastimes. Pastimes become parables of Christian life? Yes, in the hand of such a master as St. Paul they easily and frequently did. And, if pastimes, why not all the engagements of life? Assuredly we have Scriptural warrant for letting commerce become such a parable. "Buy the truth," &c. Do not agriculture, travel, art, music, in a word, all human occupations stand out to thoughtful eyes as indications of the true merchandise of soul, the true exploration, the true painting, the

true harmony, of which all that concern merely the material and palpable are but shadows. "The things that are seen are temporal," &c.

II.—THAT THE HIGHEST OCCUPATIONS OF LIFE CHALLENGE AND EMPLOY ALL THE BEST QUALITIES OF MANHOOD THAT ARE EMPLOYED IN THE LOWER. It is undeniable that many modern English games are contributing much to the moral as well as the physical stamina of our young men. St. Paul clearly recognised certain moral elements of great worth in those ancient Pagan games. There was the perseverance of the runner, the self-mastery of the wrestler; and such perseverance and self-mastery were not only commendable, but to be imitated by men in an altogether higher region of human experiences, even in the highest. So it is in the whole realm of occupation. The industry, the persistence, the frugality, the enterprise, the chivalry, the heroism we may see in any course of human affairs are to be imitated by us in our concern for, and contact with, the sublimest spiritual realities. Why? This leads us to notice—

III.—THAT THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR THE EXERCISE OF THESE QUALITIES OF MANHOOD, BECAUSE IN THE HIGHEST CONCERNS OF LIFE THE DIFFICULTIES ARE GREATER, THE REWARDS RICHER, AND THE FAILURE MORE TERRIBLE THAN IN THE LOWER. We might illustrate this from the familiar regions of merchandise or travel. But to revert to the passage of the epistle before us we use one of these Grecian games as specimens of all other occupations. Clearly the race to be run by the soul who would reach the true goal is *longer*, has more *obstacles*, requires more *strength* than that old race; and clearly the rewards are higher for they are *incorruptible*, by which I understand perfectly pure and unfading. And clearly the *failure* is more deplorable to miss the goal then, and there is nothing in comparison with becoming a moral castaway. So the other game of the wrestler, and so all the occupations of life have far less *difficulty*, far *inferior* rewards, far less terrible *ruin* than has the soul of man in its endeavours after the higher life.

EDITOR.

Acts xxiii. 12.

(Sexagesima Sunday.)

“AND WHEN IT WAS DAY, CERTAIN OF THE JEWS Banded TOGETHER, AND BOUND THEMSELVES UNDER A CURSE, SAYING THAT THEY WOULD NEITHER EAT NOR DRINK TILL THEY HAD KILLED PAUL.”

THIS verse, standing between two descriptions of the cruel treatment St. Paul was receiving at the hands of the Jews, may be read with either the preceding or succeeding narrative, and throws light on both of them. It tells of a *strengthening, Divine vision*. “The Lord stood by him.” Not merely presence, but as the phrase, “stood by” a man, always means, *sympathetic, protective, energising* presence.

I.—This strengthening vision WAS AFFORDED AT A MOST CRITICAL EPOCH IN HIS LIFE. Jesus let Paul feel He “stood by” him when the wild clamour of the common people, the truculent insolence of the high priest, the murderous designs of forty conspirators were all bent on breaking his spirit, if not on destroying his life. At such an epoch The Christ “stood by” him. “*In extremis*,” then Divine succour.

II.—This strengthening vision WAS AFFORDED AT AN UNLIKELY AND YET AN APPROPRIATE SEASON.

"The night." God gives songs in the night. He makes the night as day. The nights of human lives have been not less memorable than their days, and have been crowded with ministries of angels and visions of the Son of Man. One might have expected weariness, exhaustion, ill dreams, foreboding fears. But no. The curtain of the night is the pavilion in which the Highest calls to Himself His brave but wounded soldier, and communicates to him holy cheer. What cheer?

III.—This strengthening vision ASSURES HIM OF FURTHER WORK HE IS TO BE PERMITTED TO DO FOR HIS LORD. Jesus does not talk to him of rest, of withdrawal from toil or even from danger. The true worker's happiest inspiration and most valued promise is in opportunity for more work, fitness for higher work. The promise here implied (1) *preservation* of his life; (2) *wider opportunities* of usefulness; (3) *nobler achievements* than he had yet known after Jerusalem, Rome. So with all true workers. EDITOR.

Luke xviii. 35-43.

(Quinquagesima Sunday.)

FROM THE GOSPEL.

THE sufferer here may well stand before the ages as illustrating at once some of the greatest woes,

some of the noblest human elements, and the most blessed Divine deliverance of troubled humanity.

I.—HERE ARE SOME OF THE DISTINCTIVE MISERIES OF TROUBLED HUMANITY. We notice that the miseries of this sufferer, as an illustration of the miseries of the race generally, are (1) *notable*. He is by the wayside, in the busy thoroughfare between the two great cities of Jerusalem and Jericho. Everybody, so to speak, knew his misery. So is it with humanity. Who has not seen its tears, heard its groans, marked its woe? There is all the humiliation of public humiliation; there is at the same time the challenge to universal sympathy and enquiry. Why this sorrow? we may well ask as we see that "man is born to sorrow as sparks fly upwards." The miseries of the race are (2) those of *ignorance*. It is blind, has lost its highest vision. They are (3) those of *want*. "A beggar." It is in abject need. Its wail is "Who will show us any good?" It asks "for husks and no man gives."

II.—Here are some of THE MOST HOPEFUL FEATURES OF TROUBLED HUMANITY. There is (1) *enquiry*. "He asked what it meant." That is always a hopeful sign. (2) *Appeal to Christ*. "He

cried, Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." (3) *Persistence*. "He cried so much the more."

III.—Here is the BLESSED DELIVERANCE OF TROUBLED HUMANITY. Deliverance comes to this type of our suffering race as to our race itself, because (1) *he is compassionated by The Christ*. "Jesus stood and commanded him to be brought unto Him." (2) *Interrogated by The Christ*. He asked him, "What wilt thou"? (3) *Healed by The Christ*. (4) *Healed by The Christ through his faith*. (5) *Healed by The Christ and thus led to a life of obedience and worship*—"followed," "glorified," and causing others to adore God also. "All the people gave praise unto God." EDITOR.

Matthew xxviii. 20.

(First Sunday in Lent.)

"AND, LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."

A DEVOUT study of this text will make the familiar words spell out many new lessons.

I.—CHRIST is with His servants HERE and NOW. Children sing, "I should like to have been with Him then"; *i.e.*, with Christ

during His earthly life. And many "children of a larger growth" cherish the same desire, thinking that Christ was nearer to man then than now. Our text contradicts this view, and teaches that Christ is still present with His followers. This is no mystic's dream, but one of the plainest truths of the New Testament. A truth confirmed by the religious consciousness of every Christian. Thus the old-world story of a Paradise life may now be realised—like Enoch, we may walk with God, like the disciples live in Christ's presence.

II.—THE IMPORT OF THIS FACT.

(1) *Christ will lead us in what is wrongly called our secular life*, in our domestic, social, political, and business relationships. He will guide us in our choice of friends, work, and amusements.

(2) *Christ will help us in our spiritual life*. He will reveal sin and righteousness to us, and teach us to love the one and hate the other. He will strengthen us against temptation, make plain the path of duty and enable us to walk in it.

(3) *Christ will assist us in our Christian work*. Our Lord's presence is the secret of all true success. Sin is strong and we are weak, but let none be cast down;

if the Saviour be with us victory is certain.

III.—CHRIST IS ALWAYS AND EVERYWHERE WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

(1) *Always.* He is with us "all the day" on Mondays as well as Sundays. When we forget Him and wander far from the fold He follows us. He is faithful to us in our sorrows as well as in our joys; indeed, we see more of Him in times of sorrow; for just as the night reveals the beauty of the stars, so the darkness of trouble often reveals the beauty of our Lord.

(2) *Everywhere.* Not only in the Church, but in the street and the home. During the hours of work, when we sit at the desk or stand behind the counter, Christ is present,—even the time passed in amusement is spent in His presence.

(3) Thus all places are holy ground, all days are holy days, all work is holy work, for Christ's presence hallows all; and so the distinction between secular and sacred is done away with, not by bringing down the sacred to the level of the secular, but by raising the secular to the level of the sacred.

IV.—THE EFFECT THIS TRUTH, IF REALIZED, WOULD PRODUCE.

This truth, firmly grasped and kept before us, would work a moral revolution in our lives. If the merchant realized this, there would be less "commercial morality," less gambling, and, so, fewer failures and frauds. If the tradesman realized this, there would be less adulteration. If some modern builders realized this, the death-traps many of them erect would no longer disgrace our civilization. If the workman realized this, there would be little waste of time and material and no "scamping" of work. If the minister realized this, he would preach with less fear and more power. If the congregation realized this, greater reverence would prevail and more attention would be given. If we all could grasp the thought that Christ sees all we do, hears all we say, knows all we think, we should act, speak, and think very differently.

If Christ is with us we need not pray for His presence. But we want eyes to see, ears to hear, hands to touch Him. We need some power that shall make Him as real to us as our eyes and ears make the friend at our side. This power is faith. "Increase our faith." "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."

BRISTOL. W. H. SKINNER.

Breviaries.

SLIPPINGS FROM THE NINTH AND TENTH CHAPTERS OF REVELATION.

(No. 1.) Moral Evil in the Universe.

“AND THE FIFTH ANGEL SOUNDED,” &c.—*Revelation ix. 1-3.*

WE take these verses to illustrate *moral evil in the universe*. Moral evil is a “*pit*”; a pit is a scene of *confinement* and *darkness*. Moral evil, or sin, wherever it exists in the spirit, imprisons the faculties and blinds the vision. Socrates has well said, “*No man is a free man who has a vice for his master*. All corrupt souls are reserved in chains of darkness. Sin is slavery, sin is midnight. In relation to moral evil as a “*pit*,” four things are suggested. I.—It is **EXPOSABLE**. “*The fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.*” Moral evil, in its incipient state, so stupifies the faculties and blinds the conscience that the subject only becomes aware of it by the advent of a messenger from heaven,—an angel from heaven uncovers it, makes it bare to the soul. How do the savages, how do the millions whose souls are buried in sensuality become conscious of sin? Only by a special message from heaven. What says Paul? “I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” That is, Paul fancied he was alive—that is, all right—until the Divine message came. Every genuine Gospel minister may be said to be a star from heaven with the “*key of the bottomless pit*,” that key with which he opens it and exposes it to the consciences of his hearers. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was such an angel; he uncovered the pit of moral evil within his hearers, and they exclaimed, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” II.—It is **FATHOMLESS**. “*Bottomless pit.*” It is an abyss without a bottom. Moral evil is fathomless. (1) Who can fathom its *origin*? We can account for sin in this world on two principles. (a) On the *principle of internal tendencies*. The human being, from the very commencement of its existence, seems to have a disposition to go wrong. (b) On the *ground of external influences*. He comes into a world where all human beings are more or less tainted with sin; the moral atmosphere which he breathes is more or less corrupt. But in the case of the first sinner neither of these conditions existed, all his propensities were toward the

right, and all external influences tended toward the right. (2) Who can fathom its *issues*? What are its bearings, ramifications, ultimate results? Problems these which the highest created intellect could, perhaps, never solve. Moral evil is, indeed, a "*bottomless pit*." III.—It is BURNING. "*A great furnace*." Sin, or moral evil, is fire; like all fire it exists in two states, *latent* and *active*. Where it becomes active it is consuming and transmuting, it consumes the good and transmutes its embers into evil, and in all it inflicts agony on the soul,—the agony of moral regrets for the past, and terrible forebodings for the future. Every sinner has a "*furnace*" within him, a furnace that must break forth into awful activity sooner or later. IV.—It is OBSCURING. "*A smoke, . . . and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit*." How great the obscuration of moral evil. It clouds all the moral stars of truth in the soul, and mantles the moral heavens in gloom. (1) *How benighted men are on the eternal question of right*. The foundations and laws of moral obligation are, in the daily course of human action, buried in darkness. (2) *How blinded men are to the eternal conditions of well-being*. Men look for happiness *without* instead of *within*; in the senses, not in the soul; in matter, not in mind; in the creature, not in the Creator. Thus, in truth, our moral heavens are starless and our path is a wilderness. We walk in darkness and have no light. V.—It is ALARMING. "*And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth, and unto them was given power*." It is here represented that from the fathomless abyss, burning and smoking, there issued a host of scorpion locusts resembling war horses, with crowns like gold, with the face of men, the hair of women, the teeth of lions, having breastplates as of iron, and the sound of their wings like the sound of chariots and of horses charging to battle. In Oriental lands and distant ages nothing was regarded with greater horror than an army of locusts; their numbers darkened the heavens, their wings rattled as thunder, and their mission was to devour. What hellish squadrons, to terrify and destroy the soul, issue from the fathomless abysses of moral evil. Terrible armies come in the memories of the past and in the apprehensions of the mysterious future. CONCLUSION.—Do not ask, where is hell? Place it not in some underground region, or in some burning planets far away; the fathomless, burning, and tormenting pit is in the soul of every morally unrenewed man. Thank God there are remedial means on this earth for the quenching of its fires, and the annihilation of all the squadrons of tormentors it sends forth.

(No. 2.) The Extremity of Anguish

“AND IN THOSE DAYS SHALL MEN SEEK DEATH AND SHALL NOT FIND IT; AND SHALL DESIRE TO DIE, AND DEATH SHALL FLEE FROM THEM.”—*Rev.* ix. 6.

WE take these words as a picture of the extremest anguish. Here we have I.—A state of misery in which DEATH IS SOUGHT. (1) *Death is universally regarded amongst men as the greatest evil.* It is the “king of terrors.” It gives terror to everything terrible in the world. The ravenous beast, the furious storm, the destructive pestilence, the engulfing earthquake are only terrible because death is terrible. (2) *The relief which men generally seek in this world in their sufferings is from death.* The mariner will forsake his ship with valuable cargo, the king will resign his kingdom, the wounded will suffer the amputation of every limb, if thought needful, to avoid death. Yet here we have a state of being where death is sought as a relief. Here we have II.—A state of misery in which DEATH IS SOUGHT AS A RELIEF IN VAIN. “*And death shall flee from them.*” It is miserable to seek relief in the most deeply felt evil, but to seek it in such an evil in vain adds wondrously to the misery of the case. Fatigue, disappointment, the consciousness of lost energy add to the anguish. Earth runs from death, hell runs after it and runs in vain. In conclusion, I infer, First: That *the fact that men are exposed to such a state of being implies that some sad catastrophe has befallen our nature.* Could Infinite goodness have created beings designed and fitted by their nature for such a state? Nay: deep within us has the Great One planted the love of life, and to seek death is to go against our nature. Sin explains it. Secondly: That *there is something in the universe to be dreaded by man more than death, and this is sin.* Death, though an evil, is not to be compared to sin. Sin, though robed in beauty and adorned with a thousand attractions, is the evil of evils. Thirdly: That *Christianity should be hailed as the only means to deliver us from this extremity of anguish.* It destroys sin, it “condemns sin in the flesh.”

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

(No. 3.) God's Word.

"AND THE VOICE WHICH I HEARD FROM HEAVEN," &c.—*Rev. x. 8-11.*

THE "*little book*," or roll, here might be fairly taken to illustrate God's *redemptive truth*, or the Gospel. The following thoughts are suggested.

I.—THIS GOSPEL IS BROUGHT TO MAN FROM HEAVEN. "*The voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book.*" Redemptive truth is a special revelation to man sent by God from heaven. Men could never have reached the redemptive idea by the study of nature or by philosophic research; or were the human mind to traverse through the whole world of natural science and to search into every part, it would never discover this "*little book*." The way in which alienated humanity can be brought into a loving sympathy with God transcends human discovery. "Ear hath not heard, eye hath not seen." Divine messengers brought this "*little book*" to man, and Christ embodied it.

II.—THIS GOSPEL IS TO BE APPROPRIATED BY MAN. "*And he said, Take it and eat it up.*" The object of the Gospel is not merely to enlighten the mind, to stimulate enquiry, or to excite emotions, but to be *appropriated as food*, to satisfy the hunger and to invigorate the faculties of the soul. "The Word must become flesh," it must course through every vein, beat in every pulse, and strengthen every fibre of our being. It is the bread of life that came down from heaven, the fruit of the tree of life. The spirit of this "*little book*" must become the inspiring and the regnant spirit of our being. III.—THIS GOSPEL HAS A TWO-FOLD EFFECT ON MAN. "*It shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.*" It is both sweet and bitter. In its disclosures of Infinite love and promises of future blessedness it is indeed "*sweet*," but in its convictions of sin, reproofs, and denunciations it is indeed "*bitter*." It produces in the soul sorrow and joys, sighs and songs, and its bitterness will remain as long as one particle of depravity continues in the heart. The experience of a Christly man is a very mixed experience during his life on earth, yonder it is all sweetness. IV.—THIS GOSPEL, APPROPRIATED, QUALIFIES MAN FOR HIS MISSION. "*And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*" Prophesying, or indoctrinating men with Divine ideas, is the grand mission of every man, but this mission can only be realised after the

teacher himself has appropriated the Divine Word. When he has it in him, not merely as an idea or a theory, but as a living power, then he will be able to "*prophesy*" with regard to "*peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.*"

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

SHORT NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

(No. 1.) The Introductory Greeting.

"PETER, AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, TO THE STRANGERS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT PONTUS, GALATIA, CAPPADOCIA, ASIA, AND BITHYNIA, ELECT ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER, THROUGH SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT, UNTO OBEDIENCE AND SPRINKLING OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST: GRACE UNTO YOU, AND PEACE BE MULTIPLIED."
—1 *Peter* i. 1, 2.

WE shall gather up the teaching of this passage by noting I.—THE GREETER. (1) His *name*. "Peter"=Rock man. The giving of that name leads us to recollect (a) *what it recalled to him of his former life*. (b) *What it tells of Christ's knowledge of his capacities and promise*. (c) *What it indicates of his ideal*. (2) His *vocation*. "An apostle." See (a) his *dignity*. An apostle is, even to teachers, what an ambassador is to kings to whom he is sent, an authoritative messenger. (b) His *brotherhood*. "An." No claim of supremacy like those who imagine themselves to be his successors. (c) His *Lord*. "Jesus Christ." Sent by Him, to speak of Him, and to serve Him.

"Friend, thrice denied, and thrice beloved;
Master, Redeemer, King."

II.—THE DESCRIPTION of those greeted. *Who* were they? "Sojourners of the dispersion. Homeless through persecution. *Where* were they? Scattered from under the shadows of the mountains of Galilee down to the shores of the Black Sea. This fisherman fulfilling his Master's promise, "I will make you a fisher of men," cast his net in such a wide sea; this shepherd obeying his Master's command, "Tend My flock," was seeking to shepherd such strayed sheep. *What* were they? "Elect." Divinely chosen to perfection of character. The design for which they

were chosen was (1) to be *made holy*. (2) To be made holy *by the Spirit*. (3) To be made holy by the Spirit *through obedience*. III.—The SUBSTANCE of the greeting. Grace and peace. The highest conception of Greek and of Hebrew blessedness. Greek, grace; Hebrew, peace. Both combined. *Grace*, the attitude of Christ, the gift of Christ, the issue of the work of Christ. *Peace*, with God, with men, with conscience. This multiplied indefinitely, not to say infinitely. They cannot have too much to exceed the apostle's desires for them. EDITOR.

(No. 2.) An Outburst of Praise.

"BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHICH ACCORDING TO HIS ABUNDANT MERCY HATH BEGOTTEN US AGAIN UNTO A LIVELY HOPE BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD, TO AN INHERITANCE INCORRUPTIBLE, AND UNDEFILED, AND THAT FADETH NOT AWAY, RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU, WHO ARE KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH UNTO SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME."—1 *Peter* i. 3-5.

HERE IS I.—PRAISE TO GOD. Peter traces the joy to its Fountain Head, the gift to the hand of the Infinite Giver. (1) Here is *reverent* praise. "Blessed." The word is consecrated to God alone and is not the word of the beatitudes; the Hebrew meaning is "Speak of Him well." (2) Here is *loving* praise. "God and *Father*." The Father of Jesus, a conception that brings Him nearer to the heart than the old and treasured description, "God of Israel." (3) Here is *intelligent* praise. "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." How vividly Peter could recal the form, voice, countenance of Jesus, and so how clear his thought would be of God. (4) Here is *grateful* praise. Praise for great mercy. II.—Praise to God for a BRIGHT HOPE OF A GLORIOUS FUTURE. (1) It is praise to God for a *hope*. Christianity does profess to satisfy all the aspirations of the soul now. The hope is (1) *Expectant desire*. What is wished for and anticipated. (2) *Living* hope. In contrast (a) with *dead* hopes, (b) with *lying* hopes, (c) with *weak* hopes. (2) It is praise to God for a *future*. A future that is (a) *in contrast with the present lot*, "sojourners." (b) A *completion* of what inheritance in Palestine might have been. This future is an *inheritance*. It can only be known negatively. It is (1) *Incor-*

ruptible, has no tendency to decay. (2) *Undefiled*, not to be spoiled by defilement. (3) *Fadeth not away*, its beauty is immortal. III.—Praise to God for HIS WONDERFUL METHODS OF ENSURING THE FUTURE AND INSPIRING THAT HOPE. (1) God has that future *reserved* in safe keeping. (2) God will, in due time, let that future be *revealed*. (3) God has *ensured* that future as an inheritance. An inheritance is *sure*; an inheritance is not won or purchased, it is a gift. How is the hope of the future inspired and preserved? (1) It is a hope *that is born with man's new birth*. A man is an heir by birth. (a) The godly man is *born again*. (b) The godly man is *born again by the power of God*. (c) The godly man is *born again by the power of God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*. (2) It is a hope *that is continued by God in connection with man's character*. God, who is Trustee of the future, is Guardian of the heir. (a) *Guarded (i.e., kept as with a garrison) by the power of God*. (b) *Guarded by the power of God through faith*. God, who is reserving heaven for the redeemed, is training them for heaven. "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people." "It is a good land, let us go up and possess it."

EDITOR.

(No. 3.) The Testing of Religious Faith.

"WHEREIN YE GREATLY REJOICE, THOUGH NOW FOR A SEASON, IF NEED BE, YE ARE IN HEAVINESS THROUGH MANIFOLD TEMPTATIONS: THAT THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE PRECIOUS THAN OF GOLD THAT PERISHETH, THOUGH IT BE TRIED WITH FIRE, MIGHT BE FOUND UNTO PRAISE AND HONOUR AND GLORY AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST."—1 Peter i. 6, 7.

WE learn I.—THAT THE PROCESS OF TESTING A MAN'S FAITH INVOLVES MUCH PAIN. How much pain, we gather (1) *from the use of the word that describes the process, i.e., temptation*. (2) *From the spirit that those who are being tested are often possessed with "heaviness," "grief."* (3) *From the nature of the elements employed in the process*. Compared to fire, than which no material element causes more pain. These elements are "manifold," that is, not simply many, but various. With those to whom Peter wrote it was Gentile scorn, slander, persecution, martyrdom. II.—THE PROCESS OF TESTING A MAN'S FAITH IS OF SUCH SUPREME WORTH AS TO

COMPENSATE FOR ALL SUCH PAIN. This is brought out by a consideration of the fact that (1) The testing is only *temporary*, "for a season." (2) The *worth* of the soul tested. It is implied here that it is more valuable than gold. (3) The *purpose* of the process. It is (a) To *try the genuineness* of faith. (b) To *purify*. Remove alloy. As Mrs. Browning puts it--

"Purification being the joy of pain."

(c) Trains for *highest uses*. The higher the purpose for which gold is designed, the keener the furnace. (d) *Leads to highest destiny*. Praise. Honour. Glory. And all this in the most momentous epoch. "At the appearing" of Christ. Tried by Jesus as a Standard; commended by Jesus as a Judge.

EDITOR

(No. 4.) The Highest Christian Experience.

"WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE LOVE; IN WHOM, THOUGH NOW YE SEE HIM NOT, YET BELIEVING, YE REJOICE WITH JOY UNSPEAKABLE AND FULL OF GLORY."—1 *Peter* i. 8.

HERE is I.—LOVE FOR THE UNSEEN. Faith in the unseen is an axiom of common sense. Love for the unseen is an axiom with all true affection. (1) It appears difficult *theoretically*. (2) It is *common* in experience. The absent, the dead are loved. (3) It is *an element in the highest form of love*. The non-sensuous. (4) *It is a very blessed emotion*. For the hand of love brings the distant near, makes the remote easily discerned. II.—TRUST IN THE LOVED. There must be some faith before there is any love for the unseen, but love again strengthens faith. Love The Christ more, and you will trust Him more. You will believe what He says about (a) *salvation*, (b) *duty*, (c) *trial*, (d) *sacrifice*. III.—JOY IN THE LOVED AND TRUSTED. Christ trusted in, becomes Christ loved; and Christ loved, becomes Christ yet more unwaveringly trusted; and Christ thus loved and trusted, becomes Christ rejoiced in. There is (1) the joy of *rest*. (2) The joy of *communion*. This joy is "unspeakable." It cannot always be put into words. Why should it? Some of Mendelssohn's sweetest music is his "Songs without Words." It is a joy that is "glorified." It is the coronation of joy; the transfiguration of joy. Heaven enters you before you enter heaven.

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

THE POOR AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES.

(A Chapter from the "Report of the Committee for Enquiry into Condition of the Poor." *Chairman*,—Right Rev. LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTER. *Vice-Chairmen*,—Colonel MACLIVER, J.P. ; Rev. Canon MATHER, Rural Dean ; Rev. URIJAH R. THOMAS, Minister of Redland Park Congregational Church. *Secretary*,—Rev. M. S. A. WALROND, Rector of St. Lawrence Jewry, London.)*

THE inquiry of the Committee has specially dealt with the physical and moral condition of the poor. There seemed difficulties in any direct investigation into their religious condition. On this subject the Committee issued no paper of questions. Indirectly, however, from several of the most experienced of the repliers—themselves labouring amongst the poor from religious motives, and their work being of a religious character—much information on how religious influences affect the poor has been received. Such information has, perhaps, gained in value because it has been indirect, and linked with information concerning how other and more secular things affect them. Religious influences, as it has seemed to the informants, often determine the physical and moral conditions of the poor, and even supply the only animating principle of any likely amelioration of their lives and circumstances.

Some notice, then, of the religious condition of the poor has been forced on the Committee, and their Report would be incomplete without a brief statement on the subject.

And to begin with, it may be confidently said, that, beyond most towns of its size, Bristol is rich in religious institutions and agencies. There are a large number of places of worship in Bristol. There are a large number also of ministers of religion (not all, however, engaged in active duty). In all the day schools in Bristol, denominational or Board, religion is taught and acknowledged. There are large Sunday schools, as has been shown, well filled and conducted by numerous devoted religious teachers. There are laymen, paid and unpaid, working with intelligence, zeal, and persistence in spreading religious influences amongst the poor. These form quite an army, and are of all classes of society. There are many women spending time and heart in the same religious enterprise. There is much, moreover, of that very real and visible and most efficient demonstration of Christian power—self-sacrificing maintenance of institutions for the sick, the aged, the helpless, the sinful.

* We hope in our next number, and some ensuing numbers, to call attention to this Report, which we strongly urge our readers to obtain.

Besides this, there is in Bristol, except in a very undisciplined and intermittent way, no open aggression and propagandism of infidelity, winning, as, alas, it often does in other large towns, many of the poor and even citizen classes to its dreary cause.

The "tradition," so to speak, is in Bristol more distinctly than in many other places in favour of religion.

How far do all these things, the agencies, the institutions, and the like affect the poor? How far have they reached effectively the masses?

These are questions not easy to answer.

Perhaps it may be true to say, that religious influences affect the poor quite as much as they affect any other class of society, except the lower middle class. That the upper classes of society respect more decorously the conventional forms of religion is of course true, but there are reasons for this which are not far to seek. The very leisure, the repute, the respectability of the upper classes are helps to them which the poor lack.

That the great mass of irreligious persons is to be found amongst the poor is again true; but then the poor are the great mass of the nation.

That irreligion appears more prevalent amongst the poor, more gross in its effects and more repulsive in its aspects; this again is indisputable, but, on the other hand, we must remember that the irreligion of the poor is evidenced more "out of doors" than that of the rich, and is thus more vulgar and noticeable.

Again, in another way, the upper classes are so far better in respect to religion than the poor in that they are unconsciously affected daily by *indirect* religious influences which do not always reach the poor; making them more refined in habits, more pure and restrained in speech, more sober, decent, courteous. These are conspicuous and valuable advantages.

Against these can only be marked, in favour of the poor, the less conventional but more inherent qualities, in which the poor as a class cannot be surpassed—patience, endurance, self-sacrificing generosity towards others, natural simplicity, trustfulness, and a sympathy free from self-consciousness. They live their lives, too, many of them, in a deep unpretending sense of God's providence.

But still, that the religious condition of the masses in Bristol, notwithstanding what has been said above, is, like their condition in all large towns, both sad and, indeed, disquieting, is a truth to which all those interested in them, and, it may be added, those not interested in them, need to give serious heed.

What are some of the reasons of this? First, the segregation of the town poor into communities by themselves. The dissociation of the upper

classes from them in residence, habits, and interests; their position beyond the reach of those whose sympathy might cheer them and whose example might help them, leaves them, in point of fact, almost as another nation. It is not good for any class to dwell alone. It gets self-concentrated, class faults get accentuated, class prejudices intensified. The evil effects (real enough) on the rich which come from their separation from the poor, one of the unhappy incidents of the life of almost all large towns, need not be here discussed: but on the poor the separation has told most fatally. It has made them only too often discontented, envious, jealous, hopeless, bitter. It has driven them on dull, monotonous, unintelligent intercourse with each other, unenlivened by variety and unquickened by higher influences, and has been an important factor in producing a low standard of habits and practices.

And this separation of classes has in the poor, in many cases, helped to call out an antagonism to religion. It is the classes to which they do *not* belong which affect it, and observe its ordinances, and these are the classes which keep themselves aloof from them. Religion thus appears to the poor in large cities a class badge, and that too of a class with which they have no sympathy, and the temptation at once arises to keep themselves aloof from the religion of that class. The great secret, in this regard, of the success of the Salvation Army has been that it is a religious democracy, a religious enterprise of, from, and for the people. If any restoration of religion in any organised way is to take place amongst the masses, it is not too much to say that the building must begin from the base, *i.e.*, from the people themselves. Year by year the poorer classes are becoming more and more recognised and conciliated as an important element in the State, and there is growing in them a deep, settled, though at present vaguely-defined, feeling of resentment, that they are not sufficiently recognised as an element in the constitution of various churches.

And this class feeling amongst the poor hinders the influence of the religious bodies engaged in efforts for their evangelisation. The agents of such, of whatever station of life they be, are ordinarily distrusted, as not quite disinterested, with some supposed motive lying behind in their visits, and these very visits, though commonly visits of true sympathy, if suffered silently, are often suspected as visits of class intrusion and inquisitiveness. This is specially the case when the agents, clerical or lay, do not live amongst the poor to whom they minister. They lack the *genius loci*, the subtle sympathy of scene and place, with its neighbourly revelation of daily habits, pursuits, and needs. The poor often look upon them, more or less, as strangers, and much that such agents teach is treated, even by

those most friendly to them, as very right and true, no doubt—quite what the visitor ought to have said, and even tacitly acquiesced in, but still in effect disregarded as being an alien voice—very suitable to guide others, of some other class, but not suitable for themselves.

Again, another reason for the alienation of many of the poor from religious observances is to be found in the divisions among Christian people. This prejudices the poor more than any other class against religion. The more educated classes recognise that religious divisions are not an unmixed evil. They perceive that they are often signs of vigorous and varied interest, and the natural outcome of freedom of thought with its manifold aspirations,—that they are often not inconsistent with both high spiritual enlightenment and unabated charity of opinion,—and that underlying such divisions there is often real identity of motives and principles. But by the poor religious divisions are not so regarded. Too often they see the agents of the various religious bodies contending in their midst, and they themselves or their children apparently regarded as the prizes of victory, to be won by bribes or convinced by arguments. Such simple religious faith or hopes, as, perhaps they may have, get vitiated and confused; they begin to think of profession of religion as a condescension on their part, and attendance at church or chapel an act of partizanship, and so more and more to regard religion altogether as a matter not only outside themselves and belonging to another class, but also as involving what they judge to be unreal and unworthy.

Again, another reason why religious influences so little with any permanence affect the poor, is the lack of privacy in which they live. Individuals amongst them are rarely, except in the streets, alone. Perhaps some religious influences may touch their hearts, but they are soon crowded out by the continual contact with others, by the ceaseless worry of daily cares, by the dreary round of daily struggles, under the stupefying strain of which the sense of their own personality, let alone the touch of religious influences, becomes obliterated.*

* This, and the reason which follows, are the causes of what is called the "indifferentism" of the poor to religion; the statement that they are not hostile to religion but that they only do not care about it. Such indifference is bred of the facts and accidents of their daily lives; they are often too hurried, too driven, to care about anything. "Out of the depths" of some supreme sorrow, or trouble, the heart may cry to the Father; but under the ceaseless bondage of the anxieties day by day, year by year, of precarious employment, wearying to both mind and body, it is difficult to realise the Divine presence. The indifference of the poor is not to religion only, but often to all except those interests that affect their bodily life, its needs and toils.

Again, another reason why religion makes little effective way amongst many poor is their poverty. They have been, perhaps, religious in better days ; but bad times have come and work has become slack. They have no decent clothes, or if they have they may be in pawn. They do not like to go to churches and chapels in their tattered working gear. They seem forced to give up habits of worship, and so unhelped by its instructions and graces, unsolaced by its rest and comfort, their religious feelings die away.

Some such are, perhaps, the leading reasons why religious influences do not enter more deeply than they do into the hearts and lives of the masses. To which must be added, alas, the inveterateness in many of their own evil habits ; their vitiated moral and physical condition, inherited, perhaps, from parents of a like character, or engrained by example and counsel from infancy ; the appalling counter-influences of drink, of impurity, of falsehood, of dishonesty, of ignorance ; these environ many lives so thickly, that during a life-time they never escape out of their gloom, but pass away unenlightened by any spiritual influence at all, or at best only by a flickering ray.

These are the reasons which make it hard for many of the poor to live godly lives in this present world. These are the reasons which in some of the most degraded parts of Bristol make "the tradition" of whole streets and courts not in favour of religion but against it. Districts in which, alas ! notwithstanding zealous efforts of many Christian workers, the current of public opinion, hope, and practice, is still flowing (as it has flowed for generations) in favour of evil, engulfing boy and girl, youth and maiden, men and women, in its fatal waves.

What can be done to remedy these things ?

Perhaps somewhat in these directions.

1. Let more of the rich and upper classes, as a matter of self-sacrificing duty, *live amongst the poor*.
Let all agents, clerical or lay, men and women, engaged in ministering to them, as far as possible, do so.
2. Let more effort be made to interest the poor in the organisation of the several religious bodies : let each find work for all, of even the poorest classes, who are ready to undertake it.*

* It is wonderful how the responsibility of even the smallest office, paid or unpaid, links the holder of it to the church, or chapel, or mission room ; what decency, self-respect and dignity is added by it to his life. Only those who have tried it can know how effective is the influence on their fellows of working men attached to a place of worship by habit and affection. What a pride, even the

3. Let places of worship be open, and invitingly open, to the poor, as places of quiet and retirement for prayer, specially at hours suitable for the working classes.
4. Let all efforts be made to improve the moral and physical condition of the poor, in the ways previously set forth in this Report. Such efforts are really the best means of rendering possible religious impressions, or improving their capacity to receive them.
5. Let a wise and considerate spirit influence the efforts of the various religious bodies in the way of gathering in the poor into their communities. Let an agency of one denomination order itself wisely and charitably in a district, in which the poor live, where another agency seems to be doing good work. Let such agencies not eagerly accept wanderers from one fold to another. Let them co-operate, where possible, in evangelising effort, and, at least, show common cause and fellowship.

The Committee would close this slight sketch of some of the reasons why religious influences fail to reach the many poor, by some further remarks on one or two more formal points.

First, it seems plain that one reason why many of the poor live irreligious lives is because—even when in infancy and childhood they may be taught in Sunday schools and be generally under religious instruction—there is not sufficient and suitable means to carry on the impressions made upon the boy or girl's mind to manhood and womanhood. During the years from sixteen to twenty many of both sexes “fall.” The temptations of that passionate and wayward time of life lead them astray; they give up religious habits, and begin the more responsible years of life too often careless and godless. Much greater efforts should be made to retain these young persons under religious influences; and many more adult classes for them, and Sunday meetings, and the sympathising care of earnest men and women increasingly enlisted are much needed in their regard.

Secondly, the religious services of probably all religious bodies need some adaptation to suit the wants, the hopes, the understanding of the poor. The rich, in their choice of many churches with varying ritual, have means of abundantly suiting their tastes and prejudices. The middle class, to whom the services of churches and chapels are an intellectual stimulus, as well as a religious help, have the same. But

poorest, may be induced to take in it. In many of such places of worship of the poor, the richer members of the community, should they attend it, should refrain from holding office, or taking conspicuous place or lead.

with the poor it is otherwise. They are more ignorant, they are more emotional (for education disciplines and restrains the emotions) than other classes, in a sense they are more earnest, they have more real needs, and (at least for the moment) feel more deeply than other classes, and yet in many places of worship * they have no other services offered them than the usual and appointed services, which, however wise and elevating in themselves, are often unintelligible to them, which bewilder and weary them; which throughout hardly express any of their real thoughts and aspirations.

If the poor are to retain interest in, to be won to ready observance of, religious worship, religious services † must be adapted to suit their minds, tempers and characters, and to train them to those higher services which lengthened Christian experience has shown to be the most quickening forms of access to the throne of Almighty God. They must be lively, they must to some extent appeal to the emotions, ‡ they must be varied—the poor cannot bear too long a strain on their attention—they must be simple enough in singing and the like for them easily to join in them, elastic, orderly, and reverent. The pulpit instruction should be plain and earnest, brightened by occasional illustration, based, indeed, on the great religious truths, but *practical* in their application to the moralities of daily life; it should avoid excitement or denunciation; it should be calm, tolerant, marked by Christian good sense, sympathetic, and most of all hopeful and comforting.

One last word may be added; if religious influences are to reach the poor they must be *taken to their homes*, but in no professional or patronizing way, rather by men and women living amongst them, knowing them and being known of them, loving them and being loved by them, and *then, and not till then*, bearing to them as the very token and manifestation of that love, the sacred truths which their own hearts feel, and by the light of which they themselves are seeking, however failingly, to live.

* The seats of the poor in many churches poked away in the background, hassockless, and conspicuously pauper-looking; the unfriendly demeanour of pew-openers or chapel-keepers, these are causes which, in some instances, (happily decreasing) deter the poor from public worship.

† In some cases it is desirable to have mission buildings for *their own* services; but, as a rule, too evident separation of classes in worship is not desirable.

‡ The emotional nature of the poor is at once a real means of help to them in accepting religious influences and a danger. If too often or too excitingly appealed to (as is often the case in present times) it wastes their truer and deeper sympathies.

Personal Influence.

“How, after all, has the truth maintained its ground among men, and subjected to its dominion unwilling minds, some even bound to the external profession of obedience, others at least in a sullen neutrality and the inaction of despair? I answer that it has been upheld in the world, not as a system, not by books, not by argument, nor by temporal power, but by *personal influence*.

“Here is to be taken into account, first the natural beauty and majesty of virtue, which is more or less felt by all but the most abandoned. I do not say virtue in the abstract, virtue in a book. Men persuade themselves with little difficulty to scoff at principles, to ridicule books, to make sport of the names of good men, but they cannot bear their presence: it is holiness embodied in personal form which they cannot steadily confront and bear down; so that the silent conduct of a conscientious man secures for him from beholders a feeling different in kind from any which is created by the mere versatile and garrulous reason. Next we consider the extreme rarity, in any great perfection and purity, of simple-minded, honest devotion to God, and another instrument of influence is discovered for the cause of truth. Men naturally prize what is novel and scarce; and considering the low views of the multitude on points of social and religious duty, their ignorance of those precepts of generosity, self-denial, and high-minded patience which religion enforces, nay, their scepticism (whether known to themselves or not) of the existence in the world of severe holiness and truth, no wonder they are amazed when accident gives them a sight of these excellencies in another, as though they beheld a miracle, and they watch it with a mixture of curiosity and awe. Besides, the conduct of a religious man is quite above them. They cannot imitate him if they try. It may be easy for the educated among them to make speeches or write books, but high moral excellence is the attribute of a school to which they are almost strangers, having scarcely learned, and that painfully, the first elements of the heavenly science. One little deed done against natural inclination for

God's sake, though in itself of a conceding or passive character (to brook an insult, to face a danger, or to resign an advantage) has in it a power outbalancing all the dust and chaff of mere profession,—the profession, whether of enlightened benevolence and candour, or, on the other hand, of high religious faith and of fervent zeal. Men feel, moreover, that the object of their contemplation is beyond their reach,—not open to the common temptations which influence man, and grounded on a foundation which they cannot explain. And nothing is more effectual, first in irritating, then in humbling the pride of men, than the sight of a superior, altogether independent of themselves. The consistency of virtue is another gift which gradually checks the rudeness of the world and tames it into obedience to itself. The changes of human affairs, which first excited and interested, at length disgust the mind, which then begins to look out for something on which it can rely for peace and rest; and what can there be found immutable and sure but God's words and promises, illustrated and conveyed to the enquirer in the person of His faithful servants? Every day shows us how much depends on firmness for obtaining influence in practical matters; and what are all kinds of firmness, as exhibited in the world, but likenesses and offshoots of that true stability of heart which is stayed in the grace and in the contemplation of Almighty God? Even with these few considerations before us, we shall find it difficult to estimate the moral power which a single individual, trained to practise what he teaches, may acquire in his own circle in the course of years."

Dr. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

SCHOOL TIME LONGER THAN WE SOMETIMES THINK.—"Think of the number of infants that die under a year old. We cannot suppose they go out of school. Why should it be any difficulty to us that after a long life many should leave this world as much in need of prolonged discipline? Everything in our experience seems, if I may say so, to indicate something very lengthy; God is in no hurry with us: let us be in no hurry with Him."—T. ERSKINE.

Suggestions for Science Parables.

All material Nature is but a parable of Spiritual realities.

"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry,
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,
Clear as the sea or sky."

DR. WILLIAM ARTHUR.

THE MINISTRY OF NATURE.—"A system of bounties and reciprocal services runs through all this chain of creatures. It is not for the good of the clay that are elaborated its nourishing principles. It is turning what earth and heaven have given it into uses for powers higher up. It is not the grasses that need the seeds of grasses to live upon. It is not the flax that needs either linen or linseed oil, It prepares the material of the one and the other—"not for ourselves." Apple trees do not eat apples. Cotton bushes do not wear muslin. The eucalyptus does not dread malaria. The tea plant or the coffee plant need no nerve stimulant. Rose bushes seek no pleasure in red or white, in exquisite forms or sweet odours. From the moss up to the mighty trees every plant reaches up from the earth towards heaven, having written upon the sap of it and in every limb of it the law that they shall provide not only for themselves, for their own nutrition and reproduction, but shall minister to the want of higher things."

MODIFYING PHENOMENA.—"Take a case where the agent to be acted upon lies farther down in the scale, below the line of consciousness. Three apple trees grow side by side. Whoever plucks fruit from the one on the right or from the one on the left says, Sweet; but whoever plucks from the one in the middle says, Sour. It is vain for this tree to sigh for sweetness, it was never grafted and cannot graft itself. It is vain for it to appeal to its neighbours on the right hand or the left. They cannot make the tree good. It would be contrary to nature that a tree

with such juices should bear sweet fruit. And if all the trees in the garden united to say, 'We do not believe that the fate of the trees can depend on anything higher than trees, or that any providence ruled by a thing so capricious as a will can have sway above the self-evolving forces of vegetative organization'; or even if they all went on to say, 'As to myths about minds, purposes, intentions, and volitions of an unknowable being called a gardener, they are idle,'—it would alter nothing. There is a being higher than trees. There is for them an invisible world called mind. That mind does hold over them the position of limited providence, but limited from above, not from below. And if the gardener comes and performs the operation which he knows how to perform, the sour shall become sweet, the bad tree good. In this the powers of nature shall have been in no wise exceeded, or her laws broken. And over every evil tree in this thicket here present this evening there moves one mighty Vine-dresser, who rules over all the rules of the natural world, and under whose wise hand the wild branch may be grafted, not in the ordinary course, but contrary to nature, into the good tree, and may henceforth commence to bear fruit both sweet and fair."

BRISTOL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE. T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.



POPULARITY.—"The liveliest image of hell upon earth that I can form to myself, is that of a poor bladder of a creature blown up by popular wind, and bound to keep himself blown under pain of torment very severe, and with torment all the while, and the cracking to pieces of all good that was in him. I have looked on this close at hand, and do shudder at it as the sternest doom that can befall a son of Adam. Let me break stones on the highway rather, and be in my own heart at peace. I do feel peaceable and with a peace not dependent on other men or outward things, but on myself."—T. CARLYLE.

Reviews.

OLD AND NEW THEOLOGY. *A Constructive Critique.* By Rev. J. B. HEARD, M.A.; author of "The Tripartite Nature of Man," &c. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

We have to thank Mr. Heard for an unusually able book, which will, doubtless, before it is many weeks old, find its place on the shelf of the favourite works of all the more thoughtful ministers of the day, and of that better class of laymen to whom true theology has its genuine attractions. When we mention that the volume is dedicated to Alexandre Vinet and Erskine, of Linlathen, we have indicated the aroma, both intellectual and spiritual, that clings to it. In his opening chapter Mr. Heard clearly defines the limit of his enquiry, and shows that theology has four divisions,—Bibliology, Theology Proper, Soteriology, and Eschatology; and having asserted that his purpose is not to deal with the truth of revelation or miracle, he proposes to subject to criticism the popular theology on the Being of God, the Plan of Redemption, and the Larger Hope for the Race here and hereafter. With these high themes he is concerned in the eighteen chapters that follow. His treatment of these themes is fresh and free, yet distinctly reverent and profoundly religious. Altogether his book is a contribution of the first order to the theological literature of our times. We shall hope to recur to the work again and again, both for our own sake and our readers'. For theirs we shall supply extracts, that, if, unfortunately, they are unable to possess the book, may be some compensation for so serious a loss. Those who can procure it should make haste to make it their own in every sense.

LYDIA GRIFFITHS; and Some Reminiscences of Missionary Life in India. By a Missionary's Wife. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

We happen to know the "missionary's wife" who writes this little sketch to be a woman of equal piety and judgment; a devoted worker, a wise observer, a trustworthy chronicler. But if we did not previously know this, the book bears the marks of such authorship. The deeply interesting life of this young Hindoo is remarkably well told. It has far more than the charm of fiction to an earnest reader. And without any

attempt at sermonising, and, indeed, without any prosy moralising, the author makes great lessons rise up one after another out of the narrative, and utter their appeal to Englishmen who rule India and to Christians who love India. We recommend this book to be read in Missionary Working Circles, to be placed in Sunday School Libraries, to be given broadcast as a gift wherever it is desired to sow the seed of an intelligent and enthusiastic care for the great Foreign Missionary Enterprise.

JOHNSON ; HIS CHARACTERISTICS AND APHORISMS. By JAMES HAY.

RAMBLES IN THE FAR NORTH. By B. M. FERGUSON, M.A. London : Paisley, Gardener & Co.

No man has appeared in the fields of literature in any age greater than SAMUEL JOHNSON, great in intellect, great in learning, great in heart,—a grand cedar towering high above all the surrounding trees in the forest. We are now reperusing his “Rambler,” and every chapter charms us beyond measure. What the most illustrious writer of our age—Thomas Carlyle—has said of Dr. Johnson is grandly true, and contains the greatest compliment that can be rendered to an author. “To Johnson, as to a healthy-minded man, the fantastic article sold or given under the title of fame had little or no value but its intrinsic one. He prized it as the means of getting him employment and good wages, scarcely as anything more. We reckon it a striking fact in Johnson’s history this carelessness of his to fame.” Every youth should read this book, it will stimulate and qualify him to peruse and appreciate the works of grand old Johnson.

RAMBLES IN THE FAR NORTH is a record, deeply interesting, of travels amidst scenes where there is much to charm the imagination and gratify the historic appetite. The book contains many anecdotes, both humorous and solemn. He who begins to read this work, and we would advise all to do so, will scarcely fail to read to the end.

GUIDES AND GUARDS IN CHARACTER BUILDING. By C. H. PAYNE, D.D., LL.D. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

This is a volume of sermons on Scripture characters, such as Joseph the incorruptible young man, Moses the uncrowned king, David from the

sheep-fold to the throne, Absalom the fast young man, Solomon the brilliant failure, Daniel the uncompromising young man, Lot the self-seeker, Ruth the true-hearted, John the Baptist the courageous man, Thomas the honest sceptic, Cornelius the truth-seeker, Timothy the faithful disciple, Paul the hero. These discourses are what may be called popular. They are neither very original nor very profound. The author's estimate of some of the characters here is such that no one who thoroughly understood the immutable standard of moral character, viz., assimilation to Christ, and who brought the lives of the men he here sketches to such a standard, could possibly form.

KESHUB CHANDRA SEN. By T. E. SLATER. London: James Clarke, 144, Fleet Street.

This is the history of a wonderful man, written by one of the most able and broad-minded agents of the London Missionary Society. This volume not only presents a sketch of this truly great man's life and doings, but also numerous extracts from his grand discourses.

EGYPT AND THE WONDERS OF THE LAND OF THE PHARAOKS. By WILLIAM OXLEY. London: Trübner, Ludgate Hill.

Not a few books on Egypt have appeared during the last few years; some of them not only full of learning, which has now become tolerably common, but full of common sense and reason which are somewhat rare. It would seem that the author of this work was prompted to the undertaking by an impression which he received when in that land that there was an affinity between ancient Egypt and modern England, an affinity which he considers has been either unseen or ignored by previous authors. This volume contains fourteen chapters, the subjects of which are—"Modern Egypt the Inheritance of Great Britain, Monumental Egypt, The Pyramids, The Great Pyramid, List of Egyptian Kings, Egyptian Astronomy and Chronology, Egyptian Magic and Spiritism, Egyptian Spiritism, Egyptian King-gods, Egyptian Sacerdotalism, The Egyptian Religion, An Egyptian New Year's Carol, The Egyptian Scriptures, The Transition from Osirianity to Christianity." The book contains numerous illustrations, such as a list of Egyptian Kings, The Egyptian Trinity, The Portrait of Sethi I., The Great Pyramid and the Sphinx, Egyptian Amulets, Birth of Rameses II.,

Death and Resurrection of Osiris, Isis presenting the God-son to the God-father, The Great Judgment Scene, Star Chart of the Astro-theological Planisphere, The Egyptian and the Christian Madonna and Child, Ptolemaic Gateway to Temple of Karnak, &c., &c. As a whole this work is full of very admirable information. We regret, however, that the author seems to take it for granted that England is justified in its conduct in relation to Egypt, and in calling the Arabs, whom it is now murdering by thousands, "fanatics." If they are fanatics in this bloody war, we are fiends. The journals lately reported that our countrymen in one battle a few days ago slew no less than 800 of these Arabs, and in their diabolic work sacrificed a number of their own officers, numbering amongst them not a few of their bravest men. Inasmuch, however, as such men sold themselves for gain and fame to the cause of rapine and murder, a righteous philanthropy has no tear to shed over their grave. They sold their lives to the demon of destruction.

ESSAYS ON LIFE, MORALITY, AND PROGRESS. BY JAMES PLATT. London: Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers' Hall Court.

This volume is devoted to the discussion of Life, Morality, and Progress. The subjects are vast and varied, and involve questions touching all that concerns this life and the life to come. The author is undoubtedly a man endowed with abilities of a high order, both natural and acquired. Whilst we most heartily concur in and highly appreciate many of his views, we are bound to protest against some of his observations concerning Mr. Henry George, one of the grandest men of the age in our opinion, possessing a clear and deep insight into the rights of man as man, and having courage enough to proclaim with a remarkable force of logical and rhetorical ability his views to the world. Mr. George, like all ethical thinkers worth the name, regards man as having inalienable rights, rights independent of human legislation and social custom. We honour Mr. Chamberlain, our President of the Board of Trade, for his intelligence and courage in proclaiming this doctrine in his speeches at Ipswich and elsewhere recently. Perhaps he is the only man in the Cabinet and in the House of Commons, with the exception of Sir Wilfred Lawson and a few others, who holds and courageously proclaims such convictions. Seldom has anything so astounded us as an article which appeared in the *Times* the other day, the writer maintaining the absurd and blasphemous doctrine

that man has no rights but those that are given to him by the legislative enactments of men, which are but the organised opinions of our countrymen, most of whom are uneducated, and not a few of whom are fools. Because men attach a fictitious importance to the *Times* newspaper, such rubbish passes not only unchallenged but is received with faith. One of the most important laws necessary to be passed in England to-day is that requiring every man who writes an article in our public journals to attach his name thereto. Mr. Buckle,—a young man, and, therefore, a man of very limited experience,—is the editor of the *Times*, and yet, in the estimation of the vulgar, he is the organ of all the wisdom of the age.

On the whole, the book before us we heartily commend to the thoughtful perusal of our readers. It will quicken their intellect and set the wheels of thought agoing with fresh power.

HIGH AIMS ; OR STUDIES FROM THE ANNALS OF CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR.

By ELEANOR PRICE. London : Nisbet, 21, Berners Street.

There are sixteen articles in this little volume most interesting and inspiring. The subjects are—"The Hero of the Bicetre-Pinel—The Story of La Garaye—The Negro's Friend—Granville Sharp—A Light in the Prison—Sarah Martin—Under the Blue Flag—Pastor Fleinder—The Three Fountains of Hoenderlo—Pastor Heldring—The Children's Colony—Sister Rosalie, the Mother of the Poor—A Lady of Hamburgh—Mother Margaret—The Dantzic Wigmaker's Son—Bishop Mackenzie—Jeannie and her Sisters—The Origin of the Little Sisters—The Story of a Nurse, Agnes Jones—Coral Islands—Bishop Patteson—A Silent Life." The facts concerning the great characters and events in this volume are well told and are most interesting.





The
Leading Homily.

THE SUPREME LAW OF SOCIAL LIFE.

“ALL THINGS THEREFORE WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO UNTO YOU, EVEN SO DO YE ALSO UNTO THEM.” (*R. V.*)—*Matthew* vii. 12.

IN this great sentence,—a sentence that is as the sun in the firmament of our social life,—our Saviour is using the fact that God’s dealing with men is imaged by their best dealing with each other, and is indeed also guaranteed by such dealing, as an argument for men rightly dealing with their fellow men. The true parent’s care for his child is a parable and a promise of God’s gracious care for man. The Divine goodness to us is a reason for our goodness to each other; the human goodness of men to each other is a revelation of the Divine. We may not miss such thoughts as these which are gathered up in the “therefore” that fell from the lips of our Lord.

But it is sufficient for our present purpose to dwell on the sentence itself, even apart from its suggested connection.

John, in his vision of the New Jerusalem, saw an angel who had a golden reed with which to measure the city. Here we have in the hands of Him whom all the angels worship, a golden reed with which to measure all our intercourse, all the social dealings of which the city life is a symbol. Whether it be in the church or the market, the school-house, or the senate, or the home, all that is comprised and comprehended in our social life can be tested and regulated by the principle that is in these words. Let us notice—

I.—THE LAW OF OUR SOCIAL LIFE which Christ here enforces. As we let our thoughts play freely around this great commandment of our Lord, we are led to consider—

1. *The principle at the root of this Law.* What is the basis on which this requirement rests, the principle out of which the course of conduct here indicated springs? “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” That carries this with it. It is because we are to love our neighbour as ourself that we are to treat him as we would have him treat us. That is the rationale of the obligation. And moreover such treatment is the only sign that we are possessed with this principle. Where that second great commandment is an authoritative and constraining law of man’s life the conduct Christ here enforces will of necessity follow.

2. *The application of this Law in its practical operation.* It is not a matter of feeling merely, but of action. “Do.” What will the doing mean? Simply this: change places with your fellow man, or at least let him be a mirror in which you see yourself. Then you are prepared to settle what he expects, needs, claims, by your realisation of what you in his circumstances would expect, need, claim.

3. *The characteristics of this Law.* Much might be said about it, at least the following four things may be predicated of it.

(a) It is a *definite* Law. There is no room for casuistry in dealing with it. It falls upon the way of duty like a clear ray of white light.

(b) It is a *portable* Law. By that I mean it is always at hand, always ready to be appealed to. It is like the “two-foot rule” which the skilful artizan always carries with him ready to take the measurement of any work to which he is called; a rule is his that can measure the brick that is but of few inches length, or that could compute the height of the Pyramids. So is it with this Law. Other social regulations, such as those of professional etiquette, of trade customs, and even of national statutes are continually failing men according to the class or country in which they are found. But this is ever at hand.

(c) It is a *universal* Law. In two senses it is thus universal. For, first, it will direct *all men*. It is for all ages, for the child

and for the patriarch, for all classes, for employers and employed, for all lands and times, for England as much as for Palestine, for to-day as much as for the wondrous "Eighteen Hundred Years Ago," and for the most distant millennium through whose sunny cycle our world may yet sweep. And, secondly, it will direct all men *in all social duties*. The application of it will ensure honesty in commerce, kindness in domestic life, neighbourliness, truthfulness, and, above all, justice. It is the panacea for all the wrongs that men wreak on their fellow men, whether it be in the strife of tongues, the cruel rivalries of trade, the harshness of ecclesiastical animosities, the tyrannies of privileged classes, or the enormities of international war.

(d) It is a *beneficent Law*. Not simply good-intentioned, as so much faulty human legislation is, or benevolent, as all ought to be, but actually and practically beneficent. It creates for society a new heaven and a new earth. Under its influence the former things, the hateful things of despotism, and persecution, and slander, and war, and unkindness, and neglect, pass away, and all things become new. One whose devoted life gave him a right to say, wrote truly, "Every solitary kind action that is done, the world over, is working briskly in its own sphere to restore the balance between right and wrong. Kindness has converted more sinners than either zeal, eloquence, or learning, and these three never converted anyone unless they were kind also. The continual sense which a kind heart has of its own need of kindness keeps it humble. Perhaps an act of kindness never dies, but extends the invisible undulations of its influence over the breadth of centuries." The central soul of such kindness is the principle of the law now before us. The reason the world is still scarcely out of its moral winter, at best slowly emerging to its spring instead of rejoicing in its summer is, as Dr. Chalmers strongly puts it, that men are still trying the experiment of seeking to make universal selfishness do the work of universal love. Till the principle Christ here enjoins is the touchstone of all social action, the spurious will often pass for the true; till it is the foundation stone of the social fabric there will be no stability, or steadfastness, or glory in human relationships.

II.—SOME OF THE REASONS FOR OBEDIENCE TO THIS LAW. Our very effort to describe the Law has led us to notice much that is an argument for complying with it. But, pursuing the reasonable question, Why should this Law be obeyed? We may observe—

1.—*That it is a Law that has the impress of the highest authority.* It comes to us with the authority of Christ and of Conscience.

(a) *It comes with the authority of Christ.* That in itself is enough. He went up into a mountain; and from a mountain height this Law comes to us. Not alone from the highest intellectual, but from the highest moral elevation this Prince of the Kings of the earth proclaimed this Law. As from a mountain He saw all. The panorama of human life lay under His gaze. But as from a mountain-height, He cared with the heart of Divine compassion and condescension for all. Not as most men who prate to us from the marshes of common life, nor even as others who call to us from the little hillocks of their learning and their attainments, Christ's voice comes to us from the mountain. "He spoke with authority." The Wisdom of God, the Word who was with God, and who was God, proclaims to us this Law.

(b) *It comes to us with the authority of Conscience.* Let any man fairly weigh the words that Jesus thus gives us as our guide, and he will feel that the principle they convey appeals to his inmost sense of right. It is congruous with man's moral nature. Nothing in us can challenge it, or gainsay it. Echoing right away through all the caverns of our hidden self is to be heard our "Amen." No man ever yet said it is not a wise Law, it is not a just Law, it is not a good Law. Some have objected it is not practicable. So we proceed to notice—

2.—*That it is a Law which can be obeyed.* Several considerations may combine to convince us of this.

(a) *It is so readily understood.* As we have already shown, it is not ambiguous, perplexing, recondite. He who runs may read it. Candour is all that is needed to discern its application at all times and in all places. This possibility of being easily understood and applied is an important feature in a Law; for

without it there is little chance of its being able to be obeyed. The codification of abstruse and multifarious, and often apparently contradictory legal enactments, is an acknowledged necessity, if they are to be complied with in any full and fair degree. This code is simple enough for a little child; this digest is comprehensive enough for a seer.

(b) *It has been obeyed.* To begin with, He whose lips uttered the Law fulfilled it. From beginning to end of His life He gathered up the principle and manifested it under every conceivable test; and He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps. The Head of Humanity, He is at once the pledge and power of our obedience. But after Him and through Him how many have made this the axiom of their social life! What biographies might be cited, what memories have we all of men and women in our own circle who were as clearly under the control of this principle as was Napoleon under that of ambition, or Byron of lust, or Hudson of greed for gain? We have known, and may God multiply the instances, the lives whose forgivingness, whose thoughtful kindnesses, whose unwearied pitifulness, whose unswerving justice, whose splendid self-denials, are a living commentary on the principle of doing to others as they would that others should do to them.

(c) *The Lord who gives the Law vouchsafes also the power to keep it.* Genius can so kindle genius that it sometimes seems almost to impart itself. But transcending that, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" can be imparted. He who carved for us the perfect model of character, who painted for us the highest ideal of character, who wove for us the richest music of character, stands at our side, and as we, with wondering enthusiasm and trembling awe, gaze at the model, stand before the painting, listen to the music, and long to attain to their beauty and nobleness, He says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Great Teacher is no cruel Tantalus flashing before us visions of the impossible and the unattainable, but the Brotherly Helper who will be to us, in the degree of our faith, what the Vine is to the branches, what the Head is to the body. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

EDITOR.

Germs of Thought.

The Master's Call.

(*A Funeral Discourse.*)

"THE MASTER IS COME, AND CALLETH FOR THEE."—*John xi. 28.*

PEOPLE differ greatly from each other, not only in outward appearance but also in character and disposition. In the same family, brought up under the same influences, watched over and trained by the same parents, there is often a variety of temperaments. Some are naturally gentle and timid, tractable and confiding; others are bold and strong, self-willed and self-confident. Some, like tender plants, require careful nurture; others seem fitted from early childhood to do battle with the world. We have an illustration of this in the home at Bethany. Martha appears to have been a strong-minded, energetic woman, whose spirit was not crushed even by a sore bereavement. Quick and impulsive, she could not tolerate inactivity in others. Mary, on the other hand, was tender-hearted, contemplative, calm, and sensitive, hardly fit to endure life's conflicts and cares. We think of her as sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening attentively to his discourse. Martha was business-like; Mary was devotional. The contrast between the two is plainly seen at the death of Lazarus. Martha, as soon as she heard of the approach of Jesus, went forth to meet Him, and could even enter into conversation with Him respecting the resurrection of the dead. But "Mary sat still in the house." Grief seems to have paralyzed her, until her sister returned and whispered the glad tidings,—*"The Master is come, and calleth for thee."* And He whose heart was full of sympathy met her appeal—"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died"—in a way that would afford her the truest consolation. He reasoned with Martha; He *wept* with Mary.

I.—WHY DID HE NOT COME BEFORE? They had sent a messenger to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, *he whom Thou lovest* is sick."

(1) Did He not believe that Lazarus was in danger? At first we might think so (verse 4). But the sequel shows that He meant that Lazarus should not remain under the *power of death*.

(2) Did He feel that He could do no good? The sisters did not believe this (verses 21, 32).

(3) Was He afraid of the Jews? They had already shown a hostile spirit, and for this reason He had withdrawn Himself for a season to the region beyond Jordan (verse 8). But He was never afraid of man.

(4) Had He ceased to care for the family? No. Yet doubts often enter the heart in the time of trouble that would never have arisen in the days of prosperity.

(5) Did He intend that Lazarus should die? Yes, but for a reason that the two sisters would never have divined (verse 15). An opportunity was afforded of working a great miracle, which would convince many of His Divinity who had hitherto remained sceptical.

Christ's words, "for *your* sakes," afford some explanation of the heavy sorrows which men endure still. It is not from indifference, or helplessness, or caprice, or hard-heartedness that God does not ward off trouble. It is for our sakes, and for the sake of those around us.

II.—WHAT WAS THE OBJECT OF HIS COMING? "The Master is come,"—too late to save Lazarus from death, but not too late to comfort the mourners, not too late even to raise Lazarus to life. Christ comes to the mourner now—

(1) To give consolation. He knows our condition, understands our yearnings, can enter into our most secret troubles. He was Himself "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

(2) To raise *dead hopes* to life: hopes respecting a son or daughter whose sin and shame have almost broken a parent's heart; hopes respecting our temporal or spiritual condition, which is far different from our expectations when we started in life; hopes respecting some plans that we had formed, or which had been sketched out for us by others; hopes, fondly cherished, respecting some loved one cut down in the bloom of early youth. Dead hopes! We have all had to bury them. But some may be

raised up again. The erring child may be restored; our latter end may be blessed more than the beginning; backward steps may be re-taken, and a sense of God's forgiving love regained; prospects shut out from view may yet be realities, and the death of loved ones may exert a salutary influence upon those who are left behind.

We may apply the text to some who, unlike Mary, have not yet secured the friendship of Christ. He comes and knocks at the door of the heart. The call may come secretly. He asks to be admitted as a guest, a friend, a counsellor, a guide. He wants your heart, your service, the consecration of your life.

III.—WHAT RESPONSE DID THE CALL MEET WITH (verse 29)? "As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him." Not to the grave (as the Jews thought) to weep there, but to Him who would wipe her tears away.

Promptness should be exhibited by all now who hear the Master's call. It is dangerous to delay. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation."

There is yet another sense in which these words may be taken. There will come a call to all, one by one, to leave these transitory scenes and meet Christ face to face. "Be ye ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

DERBY.

F. J. AUSTIN.

The Eternal Order.

"FOR EVER, O LORD, THY WORD IS SETTLED IN HEAVEN," &c.—
Psalms cxix. 89-91.

THE hundred and nineteenth Psalm, of which the great subject is the law of Jehovah, may be regarded as a manual of philosophy and devotion. For philosophy it is an unfailing lamp, for devotion an inexhaustible well. Conceived in the spirit of the

old covenant, it breathes the filial confidence, the lofty aspiration of the new. It is like an elevated *plateau*, standing upon which the ancient saint has attained the summit of the dispensation of commands, ordinances, and laws, and catches a glimpse of a wider horizon of *universal law*, and breathes the air of love. The words we are now meditating upon—how profound, how comprehensive, how rich in suggestion! “For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.” “*Heaven*” is the region of dominion, the region of foundations, of fountains, and sources, the central world, the seat of calm, of loftiness, of vastness, and of permanence. Here the word of God is settled for ever. The *word of God*—“Thy word”—as embodied in promulgated law, as incarnated in the living Word, represents the will and purpose of God concerning all things; it is the vocal, legible utterance and expression of the eternal Order. In reference to this our text suggests—1, Its Source; 2, Its Stability; and 3, Its Permanence.

I.—THE SOURCE OF THE DIVINE ORDER. “Heaven.” It belongs to the ancient central kingdom of the heavens. It is of old; its source and origin are beyond creaturely ken. *There* where the angels are but children is its rise; *there* where unlimited power, unclouded wisdom, all-sided righteousness are the constituent elements; *there*, beyond the counting of the changeful ages, and the region of rising and decaying worlds, is its peaceful, unassailable home—in God.

The heavens of creation declare and embody the eternal Order of the spiritual heavens. And the eternal Order flowing down like robes of light from the Throne of God adorns all created forms and beings. Be our views of the *methods* of creation what they may, it runs in the channels of the eternal Order. Reflect upon it thus, as manifested in Creation, moral Government, Redemption—in the infinitely great and the infinitely little.

II.—ITS STABILITY. Thy word is “settled” in Heaven. It is not established upon the floods, by-and-by there shall be “no sea;” it is not founded upon the hills, by-and-by “the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed;” it is not dependent upon

the astronomical heavens, for by-and-bye heaven and earth shall itself pass away; it is settled in Heaven, whose light, strength, and stability is God. Much should be said of the *breadth* and *universality* of the eternal Order. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

III.—ITS PERMANENCE. "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances, for all are Thy servants." "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure."

The *Eternal Order* implies infinite prevision, conscious purpose, consistency of aim, absoluteness of authority, harmony of design, beyond the possibility of chance or change to affect; it is inclusive of all operations, interests, duties, and possibilities; a grand *plan*, of which Jesus Christ is the Administrator, the Bible, for us men, the completed Revelation and Clue; the Blood the Seal; the Holy Spirit the Agent; and *Doxa (glory)* the Consummation.

1. *Sin is violation of, and opposition to, the eternal Order.* It is the way to certain destruction.

2. *Salvation is the voluntary falling in, by faith in Christ and a life of holiness, with the eternal Order.* "Thy statutes are my songs."

3. *The practical effect of the contemplation of the eternal Order* should be a *Faith* which fears no foe, and which, in reference to all godly service,

"Laughs at impossibilities
And says,—It shall be done."

ILFRACOMBE.

JOSEPH MORRIS.

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.—"We are not to keep on looking out for the Kingdom of Heaven, but to believe firmly that it is come, and to live and act in that knowledge and assurance. Then will it indeed be come for us."—ARCHDEACON HARE.

Double Assurance.

“FOR IF, WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON, MUCH MORE, BEING RECONCILED, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.”—*Romans* v. 10.

How anxious the apostle was in all his letters to convince believers in Christ that their position was absolutely secure, that there was no ground for fear, so long as, by a living faith, they were in Christ Jesus, and walked not after the flesh but after the Spirit. The Epistle to the Romans is marked by peculiarly strong statements upon the safety of all who repose in the love of God as exhibited in the atonement effected on the cross. The assurance of safety is deepened and doubled by the fact, that the Son of God not only died for our sins but rose again for our justification. Because He lives, we shall live also. His resurrection, ascension, and eternal supremacy in heaven, are the pledge and guarantee of complete salvation for all who are faithful unto death. “For if, when we were enemies,” &c. The text suggests the following train of thought—

I.—THE SAD STATE INTO WHICH SIN HAS DEGRADED MAN. “We were enemies.” Not simply Godless and careless—living in neglect of religion—but opposed to God, rebels against His will. Hence the heinousness and enormity of sin. The carnal mind is enmity against God,—against the holiest and best of Beings, who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all His works. The apostle knew what an enemy he had been to God, what enemies many of the persons had been to whom he wrote this epistle, therefore he refers to the state of nature out of which he and they had been lifted by the grace of God. Antagonism to God implies *alienation, guilt, condemnation*, and if persisted in—*death*.

II.—THE HAPPY CONDITION INTO WHICH GRACE ELEVATES MAN. “Reconciled to God.” The death of Christ did not reconcile God to man; God gave His only begotten Son because He so loved

the world, because He is not willing that any should perish. The exhibition of Divine love, in the sacrifice of Calvary, draws men to God, because there is proclaimed how *deep, sincere, and pitiful* He is, against whom sinners have revolted; how ready He is to forgive and save. To be reconciled to God is not only to be pardoned, but to be admitted into fellowship with Him, to enjoy Divine peace which flows from justification through faith. Reconciled to God, there will be harmony with His will and purposes as revealed in the Holy Scriptures; there will be a willingness to acquiesce resignedly in the dispensations of Divine providence, though they may seem untoward and obscure. The soul reconciled to God becomes vitally connected with the Divine life, becomes swayed and led by influences from above. What dignity and honour in such a state of oneness with the Almighty. Reconciled to Him we (a) *Walk with Him.* (b) *Talk to Him and He to us.* (c) *Work with and for Him.* (d) *Become like Him.* (e) *Become prepared to be for ever with Him.*

III.—THE DIVINE MEANS BY WHICH THAT GREAT CHANGE IS EFFECTED. “By the death of His Son.” The goodness of God, as seen in the bounties of His providence, is calculated to lead men to repentance. The voices of nature call us to grateful acknowledgment of the great and good Creator who loads us daily with His benefits. But the loudest and sweetest tones come from Calvary. By the death of God’s dear Son, we see (a) *The exceeding sinfulness of sin.* It is enough to make us hate sin with a bitter hatred, and flee from it as from a deadly serpent, when we consider the sorrow, shame, and death it has let in like a flood upon our race; but nowhere can we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin as it appears at the cross, wringing from the Redeemer His bitter cry, necessitating His atoning death. (b) *The ineffable love of God.* Not that He loved His friends, but His foes. “Herein is love,” &c. No stronger proof of the depth and reality of love can be given than the sacrifice on the wondrous cross. No wonder Jesus said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” (c) *The substitutionary character of the Redeemer’s offering.* The law

was honoured which man had broken, justice was satisfied, and an everlasting righteousness wrought out which is unto all and upon all who believe. The world is to become reconciled to God by the preaching of Christ, and Him crucified. The Spirit will take of the things of Christ, that accompany salvation, and show them unto those who draw nigh to the mercy-seat in penitence and prayer.

IV.—THE IMMOVEABLE BASIS UPON WHICH WE MAY REST OUR HOPE OF COMPLETE SALVATION. “Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” The death of Christ was not merely to save us from the penalty and consequences of sin, but to save us from the love and practice of it. The love of Christ was seen in His life, as well as in His death; and we are saved from sin by His life. (a) *By His exemplary earthly life.* He came to seek and to save the lost,—the lost image of God in the soul of man. He came to restore all those Divine powers of heart and mind which would link the prodigal child again to His loving and forgiving Father. Christ left us an example that we may follow in His steps; the mind that was in Him is to be also in us. This is how we may attain to the highest life possible on earth, by imitating the life of our great Exemplar. In proportion as we become like Him—His life becomes reproduced in us—do we become reconciled to God, do we please Him. (b) *By His exalted heavenly life.* He lives to see the purposes of redemption fulfilled, to dispense the gifts His atoning death procured. Christ died, yea, rather, *He is risen*, and lives to make intercession for all who come unto God by Him. No wonder the apostle staked all on the great doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. If we cannot look up to a risen and reigning Redeemer, then our preaching and faith are vain, we are yet in our sins. We are saved by His risen life. *He lives!*—the Lamb in the midst of the throne, and He must reign till all things are put under His feet.

CONCLUSION.—Life is worth living if we are reconciled to God, for the Divine favour brings *peace, resignation, hope, joy*. Sin may be overcome and abolished, since He is alive for evermore,

who, as the Lamb of God, took away the sins of the world. Eternity is shorn of loneliness and terror since Christ has gone to prepare mansions for those who love and serve Him. Let us *not simply look back* at what Christ did when He laid down His life for us, *but look up* and remember *He lives and loves us*. May that love constrain us to consecrate our lives to Him, then, indeed, we shall be saved from sin, restored to the Divine image here, and into the Divine presence hereafter.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

Christianity; or the Religion of Jesus.

“I CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE.”—*Mark ii. 17.*

CHRIST is the personification of Christianity. To Him, and not to the professor of religion, we must look for the revelation of true religion, in its *harmony, perfection, and value*. The text exhibits Christianity as—

I.—CHARITABLE. “I came not to call . . . but *sinner*s to repentance.” To the noblest career repentance is the first step taken by man in response to the call of God. By and through Christianity we are enabled to take this first position. It would seem the word, “to repentance,” represents not merely the beginning, but the whole of those positions needful to the growth of man after the model, even Christ. The charitableness of Christianity is shown in—

1. *Its design.* Its purpose is to *rouse the sinner from spiritual apathy*, a position which, if held, is fatal to the securing of righteousness. What is more admirably fitted to shake man from spiritual slumber than Christianity?

To *correct the sinner's moral waywardness*. Truly, man has lost relish for communion with the Almighty, and wandered far

from rectitude, and is withered as a leaf beneath the touch of sin; but Christ calls to true love, to righteousness, and to fulness of spiritual life.

To give the sinner a new nature. The old Adam must be removed. "Ye must be born from above." "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." This new nature is no offshoot of the old. It is *not a growth, but a gift*. "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible" (1 Peter i. 23). "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13). This feature of charitableness is enhanced by the consideration of its—

2. *Cost.* "*I came,*" &c. The text makes *two affirmations*. "I came not to call the righteous," and, I came to call "sinners to repentance." "I came," not I sent. "He gave Himself," "He offered Himself." Christ was not the cowering Son in terror driven by a despotic and merciless Almighty hand. To such a caricature the declaration of Christ is an emphatic answer. "I came." Yea, He came the gift of love, a *voluntary, all-sufficient, and priceless* gift. Christianity is also—

II.—PERSUASIVE. "I came . . . to call sinners." With the sinner God reasons, leads, calls, but He does *not* drive to repentance. This call is *the call of deepest intelligence*. Christianity claims the whole man, not for degradation and ruin, but for the ennobling and divine. It proffers a gift of unspeakable value and privileges of the most exalted type. The verdict of Christ's life bespeaks Christianity the "one thing needful" to man; and such is the utterance of the one whose intelligence is most searching and comprehensive. Again—

It is *the call of noblest moral excellence*. What are the characteristics of such excellence? Perfect conformity to the Divine will, an all-absorbing love of righteousness and self-sacrifice for the weal of others. Of these, Christ is the sublimest type. Here was no moral friction. "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." For holiness Christ had a perfect love, and for wrong an irrepressible hatred. The sacrifice

of Himself to a most painful campaign, even to the suffering of death for the welfare of man, is the surprise of a world. By this matchless moral excellence Christ illuminates the human lack and the Divine fulness, and woos man to holiness by His own matchless moral beauty, and renders such holiness possible to the sinner by His peerless *life, work, and provision*.

But this is the call of God. "I came." This "I" was the Creator of the universal fabric. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (John i. 10). The voice is not the voice of man but of God. Christianity is also—

III.—PHILOSOPHIC. "I came *not* to call the righteous, *but sinners*," &c. Christ, by His presence among men and His provision for man, exhibits the true dignity and test of Christianity. He went in and out among the ungodly, those who needed help, and if Christianity is fitted through God to save man, to man it must be taken, to him applied, and by him tested; and (important, blessed fact) it has stood the test. Christianity is no mere theory, but a great power. That it is philosophic is seen inasmuch as it is—

1. *A provision for those only who need it.* For the "sinner," not for the "righteous." To provide for the untainted were foolish and unnecessary.

2. *It is a provision secured only to those who feel and rightly express for it their need.* Salvation is not compulsory but by *volition*. "Chose ye this day." "Ye will not come." "Come unto Me all ye that labour," &c. *By trust* in Christ. He who secures "eternal life" receives it through faith in the Son of God. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," &c.

By love of the Christly. To be saved is to love righteousness and hate iniquity. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," &c. Truly, here is health for the spiritually diseased; wondrous vision for the blind; holiness for the unclean; life for the dead; and this to "whosoever will."

The Saviour's Last Charge.

"AND, BEING ASSEMBLED TOGETHER WITH THEM, HE COMMANDED THEM THAT THEY SHOULD NOT DEPART FROM JERUSALEM, BUT WAIT FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER, WHICH, SAITH HE, YE HAVE HEARD OF ME."—*Acts* i. 4.

THERE attaches a deep interest to this commandment of our Lord, from whatever point of view it is regarded. Tender associations cluster and cling about it. It is given by Jesus, in one of His last interviews with the apostles on earth, just before He was taken up, and the cloud received Him out of their sight.

If He commanded them, as we know He did, about the same time, to "go and teach all nations," "to go into all the world and preach the Gospel," &c., yet this commandment was to take a kind of precedence of all else, for they were not to depart from Jerusalem until they had *waited* there for the promise of the Father. Their compliance with this commandment was to be the inauguration of a new era, a new epoch in the history of the Church of God, that should cast the glory of all previous ones into the shade. Notice three points—

I.—A GRAVE CHARGE. "He commanded," &c. Revised version, "*charged*." The gravity of the charge is seen (1) in what it was He asked them to do; (2) in the issues of it. What was it they were to wait for? The *great* promise. Generally this applied to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. It was *a promise*. It was the promise of the *Father*. All that the Church needs is embraced in this promise. If a promise be of the Father, we may be sure it is inviolable, and the thing it indicates invaluable. How much hung upon this grave charge. How differently *we* are inclined to think of matters from the view *God* takes of them. Our first thought is, probably, "Why not strike iron while it is hot, and follow up just now, while the fame of Jesus is ringing out its praises, with the preaching of the truths for which He laid down His life?" God says, "tarry" till ye be endued with power from on high. "My thoughts, not your thoughts," &c. The first preachers of the Gospel and planters of the Church had given them that particular power, enabling them

infallibly to relate to that age, and to record to posterity, the doctrines of Christ and the proofs of them. Hence the gravity of the charge.

II.—AN INSPIRED ATTITUDE. "To wait." This meant three things—

(a) A looking for something under a profound conviction of its necessity.

(b) A pleading for the object in prayer; and this they were doing for ten whole days. Show what prayer meetings should be, and their place in the success of the Church.

(c) The attitude of patient expectation, of prospective sufficiency. They took hold of God in prayer and waited round about Him until He should satisfy their longings and fill them with the glory of His praise. Notice—

III.—A SPECIFIC COMMANDMENT. They were to wait at Jerusalem. This appointed place no haphazard, but a design of the Infinite mind. Recall a few things of Jerusalem to see this.

(a) *It was the city of solemnities.* Here Jews gathered—feasts and fasts held. Here stood the Temple, there it fell—there was to begin the building of a new and better temple that should stand for ever.

(b) *The city of sublime figure.* "Thou art comely, O my love, as Jerusalem." "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget its cunning." "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion," &c.

(c) *It was the concentration of all prophecy.* "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced."

(d) *How full it was of historic associations.* City of Melchizedek, place of Abraham's offering, and the metropolis of David's kingdom, &c.

(e) *It was the place of danger.* Here met all the rage and malice, envy and hatred of the time-honoured Scribes and Pharisees. Then why tarry here? To honour the people whose ancestors were worthy soldiers of the faith; to preach mercy and forgiveness where was found the most sin.

We are not to shun danger but to brave it. The *cost* of our principles is not to be considered. Let this be a picture of our religious position—true, firm, stedfast, devout, obeying the will of our Lord, and we shall do great things and come off more than conquerors.

FAKENHAM.

W. HALLS.

A Great Crisis and Great Confidence.

“I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED, AND AM PERSUADED THAT HE IS ABLE TO KEEP THAT WHICH I HAVE COMMITTED UNTO HIM AGAINST THAT DAY.”—2 *Timothy* i 12.

THESE are the words of St. Paul at the close of his wonderful career. He here looks back to—

I.—THE GREAT CRISIS IN THE APOSTLE'S LIFE—his conversion from Judaism to Christianity. There was a time when, instead of believing in Christ, he hated the very mention of His name, and made the most vigorous exertions to stamp His religion out of the world. But as he was on one of his persecuting missions, Jesus of Nazareth met and struck him down. He only struck him down to lift him up. The light did not blast, it illumined. The power did not destroy, it transformed. He rose an altered man. How thorough the change! His pride was turned into meekness, his ferocity into gentleness, his unbelief into faith, and from that day he proved himself a firm believer in, and a devoted servant of, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The sincerity and strength of his faith was shown by its fruits. It led him to renounce everything that he had previously most valued,—social position, ease, wealth, worldly honour, reliance on his own righteousness for acceptance with God, for the sake of Christ. It also constrained him to consecrate himself, all he was, all he had, to the service of Christ, and in that service to patiently and heroically endure such persecutions and sufferings as the world has seldom witnessed.

Further, he committed himself to Christ. He deposited *himself*,

his whole being, in Christ's hands, that he might by Him be purified, educated, guarded, guided, finally glorified. This was an act of truest wisdom. A proper understanding of himself, his nature, position, needs, and, of Christ, would lead any man to do the same.

II.—THE DEEP CONFIDENCE IN THE APOSTLE'S HEART. "I am persuaded," &c. This was based on knowledge. "I know Him." What did he know? He knew that Jesus was the Son of God, the divinely appointed, all-sufficient, all-loving, ever-faithful Saviour of those that trusted Him. Was not this knowledge enough to inspire an invincible confidence? How did he know this?

1. *Intellectually.* In addition to receiving a special revelation from heaven, he had so thoroughly examined the nature and evidence of Christian truth that he gained a clear, distinct, and profound knowledge. None can read his epistles without perceiving this. What clear vision! What strong intellectual grasp of the truth they display!

2. *Experimentally.* As the result of the influence of the Spirit of God on his soul, he gained a fine spiritual perception of the nature and glory of Christ. He had that vision of God in Christ which is only given to the pure in heart. In addition to this he had a long experience of his Lord's workings *in* and *for* him. Such being the nature of his knowledge he might well say, "I am persuaded that He is able," &c. He was persuaded that Christ was able to keep him, notwithstanding his own imperfections of character and life; these Christ's love would induce Him to regard with tenderest pity, and His power would eventually remove. Notwithstanding his dangers and enemies in the world; these Christ would give him grace to conquer. Notwithstanding the subtle and powerful antagonism of the Evil One; this Christ would enable him to defeat. Until that day—the day of His appearing. He was persuaded that his Lord would preserve and prepare him for that day, so that he would be presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

SHIFNAL, SALOP.

H. J. ATKINSON.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Patient Waiting.

Chapter v. 7, 8.—“BE PATIENT THEREFORE, BRETHREN, UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD. BEHOLD, THE HUSBANDMAN WAITETH FOR THE PRECIOUS FRUIT OF THE EARTH, AND HATH LONG PATIENCE FOR IT, UNTIL HE RECEIVE THE EARLY AND LATTER RAIN. BE YE ALSO PATIENT; STABLISH YOUR HEARTS: FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH.”

“WHO is it that makes people ill?” said a little girl to the friend who had been nursing her through a dangerous illness. “It is God who makes people ill;” was the natural reply. “And who is it that makes people better, then?” “It is God who makes people better,” was the equally obvious and natural reply. The child was puzzled, bewildered; to her mind such procedure was unintelligible; and her bewilderment uttered itself in a form that older heads than hers can sympathize with. “I cannot understand that,” she said; “if a man made me ill and God made me well again I could understand it, but I cannot understand how God should make me ill and then make me well again; you know I think God does not have any meaning in what He does!” It was the attitude of a bewildered child’s mind in presence of the mystery which, for all the light that has been cast upon it, remains very much of a mystery still, the mystery of suffering and affliction, the mystery of pain, of suffering, affliction, pain allotted, without any apparent cause, to some from which, without any apparent cause, others are exempted; a mystery that can only be borne with by the most patient, most persistent faith in the goodness of God, the everlasting loving-kindness of God.

I was repeating this little child's bewildered questionings the other day to a widow-lady, when I was startled for the moment to see on her countenance an expression of something like complete sympathy with the child's bewilderment, as if, indeed, the mystery had only been deepened by her longer experience with the dealings of the Most High. Usually, the interest excited by a child's questionings is the contrast between the child's thoughts and the man's thoughts; here it was the interest of identity of thought, where the child had but expressed what the sorely-tried sufferer felt. "Why has God dealt thus with

Not only a child's question. me? has He a meaning in what He has done to me? Yes, it is and it must be well, but I cannot understand it." But a year or two ago her only daughter, grown up to womanhood, the very joy of the father and mother, who could not bear her long out of their sight, had been taken from their sight till the heavens be no more; but a year ago her husband, who had never recovered the stroke of his daughter's death, had sickened and died, and now, childless and widowed, bereft of the nearest and the dearest, is it to be wondered that the child's bewildered questionings brought tears to the eyes, or that the sufferer was too keenly alive to the terrible mystery of God's dealings to smile at the form in which the simplicity of the child had expressed it? But for her Christian faith, which was well assured that He doeth all things well, the utterance of her heart might have been that of her sister of old: "Call me not Naomi,—call me Marah, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me; I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" . . .

It is when the Almighty afflicts those who so keenly feel His afflictions, it is where there is this combination—the meeting together of affliction and affection in the person of a sorely-tried sufferer, that the exhortation to patience may be urged with appropriate fervency and force; and it is to emphasize this appropriateness that I have approached the Apostle's exhortation in these apparently remote introductory remarks. Where a man is not suffering you do not need to tell him to be patient; as little,

if the suffering does not keenly touch his feelings, that is if he has no feelings to be touched. What would be great trouble to one man may be a very small trouble to another; you would never think of telling them both to be patient under it! It would only be to the man who was overwhelmed in his sorrow you would think it worth your while to go and speak a word of comfort and courage! Why speak of endurance to a man who does not feel that he has anything to endure; of resignation to

It is
resignation
which feels
the mystery.

a man who has no affection for what has been taken from him; of submission under the mighty hand of God, to him who is not conscious of the "hand" or of its "mighty power"? The exhortation to patience

implies these two things—affliction imposed and affliction felt; trouble laid upon the soul and that soul rising up in agonised questionings: Why hast thou done thus? It means suffering, and it means the soul suffering; and where you have these two things, and only where you have them, does the exhortation to patience have any meaning or any force.

In the immediate context the apostle had spoken of the sufferings to which the wicked rich oppressors of his day subjected the disciples of Jesus Christ, in this respect in particular, that they went to the extreme length of putting them to death, "condemning and killing the just," who like Him in whose cause and for whose sake they suffered, when they were reviled reviled not again, but, unresisting, committed themselves to Him who judgeth righteous judgment.

Bring all this from the vague and general to the definite and particular, let it be that in the bitterness of some persecution, through the malice of some enemy who saw in the profession of the name of Christ an opportunity for gratifying a long cherished grudge; let it be that the only son of Christian parents, the pride and the hope of their old age, was dragged to the heathen judgment-seat, summarily condemned and summarily killed;

Special
instances.

suppose this a frequent occurrence, that there were many Ramahs in which the Rachels wept for their children, refusing to be comforted because they

were not, would there not be something of Divine comfort in the

exhortation, would not he be the bringer of comfortable words who should remind such that there was a reverse future to all this, that other sufferers who had gone before them had seen the end of the Lord, that He is very pitiful and of tender mercy, and that the harvest which they themselves would reap when all the precious fruit of their present sorrow had fully ripened, would be such as should even make them rejoice they had been counted worthy to suffer? "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." "Take the prophets

Special
comfort.

who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

The first reason, or rather the ground of all the reasons why the apostle exhorts the suffering Christians to patience, is the coming of the Lord: "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, the Judge standeth at the door." This is not the same as to say that the sufferings would soon be over, that they would soon come to an end; such a common-place as that might be said of any sufferings; wait long enough and they will come to an end, death, if nothing else, will end them: but, "be patient until the coming of the Lord." This means that *He* will put an end to them, that He who for His own wise ends has been afflicting His people, and who has been sympathising with them every hour, in all their afflictions being Himself afflicted: that He who called them to suffer, who is strengthening them to suffer, and who is working out thereby for them a blessed reward, that *this One* will come in all the glory of His power to deliver them from the hands of their enemies, and introduce them to the felicities of the place He has prepared for them where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and where the hand of the oppressor shall not reach them any more. It is but a Pagan consolation to say to the sufferer, "*it will soon be over*," it is the very essence of the Christian comfort to say, "Be patient: the coming of your Lord

Pagan and
Christian
"comfortable
words."

draweth nigh: He will deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also and him that hath no helper!" To the early Christians, in those first days of the spread of the new truth, the second coming of Jesus Christ seemed a much nearer event than to us, exercised a much more powerful influence over their lives, enabled them to live in a more detached manner, so to speak, from the world. In a much more real sense than with us they had their conversation in heaven, from whence also they looked for the Saviour. The reason of this lay, partly, in their lack of that long experience which the generations since have had of the truth of the word that with the Lord a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. The life of Christ had just been lived among them, His advent, His sacrificial death, His resurrection and ascension were recent events among them, many of them had seen him in the flesh; what more natural than that with their inexperience, not knowing the times and the seasons which the Father had kept in His own power, they should be, so to speak, absorbed in the second coming as though it were not so far off as some of them at least knew that it was? *Paul knew* the advent was far off, and yet he speaks of it as if it were near at hand. It was natural that people in their circumstances should; the glory of the future was so bright that its rays reflected back upon their waiting eyes, distance was annihilated, the coming of the Lord was "at hand."

But there was another reason. These early Christians had, I do not say an intenser affection for Christ, but at least a greater power of realising His presence, a more profound sense of His nearness to them, of His being always at hand, their guide, their glory, and their defence. We cannot read the New

Looking for
the Friend,
memory
becomes a
presence.

Testament without perceiving this feature in the life and thought of the early disciples, and a little reflection will suffice to show us that the second coming, and that speedily, must have been very

familiar to their hopes. Let a man know that his friend is to return, and let there never be a day in which that friend's memory shall not be so cherished as that it shall cease to be a mere memory and become an actual spiritual presence, and it will

be natural for him to overlook the possible distance of time that must elapse before he can return. Affection performs impossibilities; it hears the footsteps of the friend afar off, it hastens to meet him ere yet he be in sight. Very likely the coming of the Lord was to many of these early Christians what it has come to be too much with us, the day of their death; but then they had along with this what we too much forget, the "looking for and expectation of" the coming of their Saviour the second time from heaven without sin unto salvation. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not" *ye may die?* No; "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." It is not the end of affliction merely, it is the end which He puts to affliction; it is not merely the calm repose of sleep after "life's fitful fever," it is that "He giveth His beloved sleep." These first disciples had the advantage of us here, and doubtless our Christian experience would be a much more joyous, gladsome thing if, imitating them, we were to go back to the simple faith and hope which animated them, and by which they were strengthened in the day of trial, by which they were made patient to endure, looking for that blessed hope, even the appearing of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The illustration of the husbandman, waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, and having long patience for it, is peculiarly beautiful and keenly appropriate. There is a harvest to which the husbandman is looking forward, it is still distant, for it is yet but the spring-time and the early rain has not yet fallen, and there may be many apparently untoward influences which to his anxieties may threaten to retard the harvest, or altogether blight and destroy it; still, despite all this, he has long patience and waits for the precious fruit of the earth; precious to him, for they are his living; precious to others, for they are their life. It is because there is this precious fruit at the harvest-time that he waits, is content to wait, gladly has long patience. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain." The

The Apostolic
Parable.

apostle does not interpret his parable; it is a transparency through which the heavenly meaning cannot

fail to be seen. You suffering Christians, you who are thus cast into trials and afflictions which are so sore to bear, and of which you cannot see the meaning, sometimes doubt whether there be a meaning; you, like the husbandman, have a precious harvest before you, a harvest which these very tribulations of yours are preparing for you. There will be a rich revenue out of all this suffering yet; the precious fruit will one day appear. "Golden-headed, ripe, and strong" will be the harvest which will be reaped by the reapers mid joy and gladness, for "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." "His anger endureth but a

The unending day. moment; in His favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,"—the morning of a long bright day. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." "No chastening, for the present, seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." "Who are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God." "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord; behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and the latter rain."

All that is needed in these afflictions that are sent to us is but to realise that they are sent to us by Him whose one sole desire is to make them to us the very bringers of glad joy. God is in

God is in it. *that trouble, that disappointment, that bereavement* of ours: *He is there*, and however mysterious it may seem, He is there as the God of an infinite compassion, everlasting, infinite love. Do we believe this? Then already the

harvest is being prepared, the early and the latter rain will not be withheld, in due time we shall reap if we faint not.

And so the affliction works out glory, the darkest night becomes bright as noonday, the messenger of evil is an angel of glad tidings. And so those who wait patiently for the Lord will find

it in every case and all through, even to the last
Therefore it trial that shall come upon them; find, at the
is well. dawning of the everlasting day, that the darkest hour of that dark night was the last thing that was needed to prepare them for the everlasting light, for the precious fruit of all the weary trials that went before. "Be patient therefore, brethren, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Amen and amen.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST.—"As far as it may be permitted us to speak of the Church of Christ as one body, its aim may be considered this: to be a sacramental medium between heaven and earth, a society constituted on divine promises and endowed with supernatural privileges in order to embody and to proclaim to men a new idea of God in Christ, and the means for realising the new duties and relations which that idea reveals and implies. To be a permanent, visible institution, abiding essentially the same in spirit from generation to generation, though its individual elements be changing perpetually, and holding out to all men, on invariable conditions, means of closer communion with God and more assured pledges of His love than can be attained anywhere else but in connection with itself,—an institution which, by its very existence, shall be a witness to the world of God being in covenant with man through Christ, and dwelling among men to pardon and bless them and purify them even as He is pure,—this is the characteristic aim of the Church of Christ."—Rev. F. MYERS.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

No. XXI.

The Cause of Right on Earth.

"AND THERE WAS GIVEN ME A REED LIKE UNTO A ROD : AND THE ANGEL STOOD, SAYING, RISE, AND MEASURE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THE ALTAR, AND THEM THAT WORSHIP THEREIN. BUT THE COURT WHICH IS WITHOUT THE TEMPLE LEAVE OUT, AND MEASURE IT NOT ; FOR IT IS GIVEN UNTO THE GENTILES : AND THE HOLY CITY SHALL THEY TREAD UNDER FOOT FORTY AND TWO MONTHS," &c.—*Revelation* xi. 1-19.

WHAT does this chapter mean ? Has it any intelligible meaning ? Is it to be taken literally or ideally ? One of our most modern, able, and distinguished Biblical critics—*Canon Farrar*—has said concerning it,—“There neither is nor ever has been in Christendom, in any age, or among any school of interpreters, the smallest agreement, or even

approach to an agreement, as to the events which the Seer had in view. . . . There are no two writers of any importance who even approximately agree in their interpretation.” Shrinking, as I do, from contributing anything to the unsightly pile of interpretations which have been given to this chapter, I shall merely use it as the Heavenly Teacher

used the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, to illustrate truth. The subject which it serves in some extent to set forth, is *the cause of right on earth*. It illustrates the fact—

I.—THAT THE CAUSE OF RIGHT ON THIS EARTH HAS ITS MEASURING RULE. “*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying (one said), Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.*” Two things are suggested—

First: That in the *human world there is right and wrong*. There is the temple of God, the altar, and “*them that worship therein.*” At the same time there is the court that is outside the “*court which is without the temple,*” a sphere discarded by the right and trampling on the holy. This, however, is only for a time.

Secondly: *That right here has its measuring line*. Take the “*temple*” here as the emblem of right on the earth, and the “*reed*” as that of the moral law of God—the law that measures moral character. Such a law we have here, here in the conscience, here in the

Decalogue, here in the life of Christ. This measuring line concerns qualities rather than quantities; it analyses all the elements of character and decides their qualities. It is a plummet that sounds the deepest depths of being; it is a moral analyst to test the quality of every thought, affection, and deed; a moral gauge to measure the height, breadth, depth of all. Supreme sympathy with the Supremely good is the law. “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,*” &c. “*Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not charity—love—it profiteth me nothing.*” This is the reed to measure the moral temple of the Soul and all its worshippers. Right here requires testing; so much passes for right that is wrong that a measuring line is necessary for testing. Notice the fact—

II.—THAT THE CAUSE OF RIGHT ON THIS EARTH HAS ITS MIGHTY DEFENDERS. “*I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy.*” Who are the two witnesses? Moses and

Elijah, Caleb and Joshua, John the Baptist and Christ, Enoch and Elijah, Peter and John? No one knows, although hundreds pretend to say. Did I believe that the chapter had a literal or historic meaning I would accept the theory that they were the collective representatives of the Jewish and Gentile converts in preference to any other. I take them here to illustrate the *mighty defenders of the cause of right in this world*. The cause of right has ever required defenders, for in every age it has countless hosts of antagonists. It has had its Elijahs, and its Johns, and its Pauls, its Luthers, its Cromwells, its Garibaldis, &c., men who have stood up, spoken in thunder, and shed their blood for the right. The vision here suggests three things concerning these defenders of the right.

First: They do their work in sadness. "*Clothed in sackcloth.*" To fight for the right has never been an easy work and perhaps never will be. They fight not in radiant robes but in sackcloth. It is not a light work to stand up

against a corrupt world and struggle against an age grinning with selfishness, sensuality, and cupidity. It is suggested concerning these defenders of the right that—

Secondly: They contribute Divine light. "*These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks.*" Language borrowed from the book of Ezekiel. The olive trees fed the lamp and the candlesticks reflected the light. Were it not for the Divine defenders of the right, grand heroes in moral history, all the lamps of truth would go out and the whole race would be mantled in midnight. They are the lights of the world. Concerning these defenders of the right it is suggested—

Thirdly: They exert tremendous power. "*If any man will (desire to) hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt (shall desire to hurt) them, he must in this manner be killed,*" &c. The true defenders of the right are invested with a terrible power. Their words flash devouring flames, so shake the corrupt moral firmament

under which their contemporaries are living, that the very heavens seem shut up and the rolling streams of life seem turned into blood. It is said that Moses turned the Nile into blood, that Elijah prevented rain descending on the earth for the space of three years. The true defenders of the cause of right are the organs of Omnipotence, their words are mighty through God. To them is committed the work of causing the moral heavens to melt with fervent heat, and spreading out a "new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Notice—

III.—That the CAUSE OF RIGHT ON THE EARTH HAS ITS TERRIBLE ANTAGONISTS. "*When they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.*" &c.

First: The antagonists of the right are *malignant*; they not only murder, but they exult in their cruelty. They are "*wild beasts*" that fight and kill; they arise from the abyss of depravity. The spirit of persecution is an

infernal virus that gallops through the veins of the intolerant persecutor, and physical violence is the weapon. Not only did their malignity destroy, but revelled in the cruelty and destruction; "*shall rejoice over them, and make merry.*" Their feet are swift to shed blood; like savage beasts of prey they revel in the tortures of their victims. Who can study martyrology without being astounded at the ruthless cruelty that runs in the blood of those that hate the right? They rent the heavens with the cry—"Away with Him, away with Him."

Secondly: These antagonists of the right are *everfrustrated*. It is said "*After three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet,*" &c. Observe (1) Their victims were Divinely re-animated. If the bodies of the two which lay crushed upon the "*street*" were not re-animated, their spirit, which was Divine, appeared in others. The bodies of good men fall to the dust, but the spirit that animated them lives in others. The spirit of Elijah enters John the Baptist in the

wilderness. The spirit of truth and goodness is a resurrection spirit, it enters those who are in the graves of sin, and they start to life and stand forth a mighty army to defend the right. Such a resurrection may well alarm the persecutors. "*A great fear fell upon them which saw them.*" (2) Their victims ascended to heaven. "*And they ascended up into heaven in a cloud.*" Heaven is ever open to welcome and receive the faithful defenders of the right. With their ascension terrible calamities befall the earth. "*And in the same (that) hour there was a great earthquake.*" The eternal hour of retribution towards their persecutors moves on, the earth quakes and thousands are engulfed in ruin. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Notice—

IV.—THAT THE CAUSE OF RIGHT ON THE EARTH IS DESTINED TO TRIUMPH. After the passing of the first two woes there is yet another to come, and after the close of the sixth trumpet the blast of the seventh is heard. "*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were* (followed)

great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms (kingdom) of this (the) world are (is) become the kingdoms (kingdom) of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Two things seem now to occur—

First: *The rapture and adoration of the good.* Sainted men and angels are represented as rising from their seats, falling on their faces and worshipping, and the reason of their worship is that the kingdoms of this world have passed into the actual possession of Christ. "*The kingdoms of this world.*" What have they been? What are they now? Hellish mimicries of eternal right and power. Like muddy bubbles on the great stream of life, they have broken into the clear and fathomless river of rectitude and will appear no more, and this will continue "*for ever and ever,*" unto the ages of the ages. Well then might the righteous worship and thank God. "*We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come,*" &c. Here is—

Secondly: *The increased accessibility of heaven.* "And the temple of God was opened in heaven." When right shall become universally triumphant, heaven will come near to man. The holy Jerusalem will come down from heaven, heaven and earth will become one.

CONCLUSION.—Suspect not the failure of right, have faith in its winning power. It has life in it, indestructible life, life that will germinate in

every land, which will multiply and cover all parts of this globe. "*The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord.*" "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

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No. XXII.

Social Christhood and Social Fiendhood.

"AND THERE APPEARED A GREAT WONDER IN HEAVEN; A WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN, AND THE MOON UNDER HER FEET, AND UPON HER HEAD A CROWN OF TWELVE STARS: AND SHE BEING WITH CHILD CRIED, TRAVAILING IN BIRTH, AND PAINED TO BE DELIVERED. AND THERE APPEARED ANOTHER WONDER IN HEAVEN; AND BEHOLD A GREAT RED DRAGON, HAVING SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS, AND SEVEN CROWNS UPON HIS HEADS. AND HIS TAIL DREW THE THIRD PART OF THE STARS OF HEAVEN, AND DID CAST THEM TO THE EARTH: AND THE DRAGON STOOD BEFORE THE WOMAN WHICH WAS READY TO BE DELIVERED, FOR TO DEVOUR HER CHILD AS SOON AS IT WAS BORN. AND SHE BROUGHT FORTH A MAN CHILD, WHO WAS TO RULE ALL NATIONS WITH A ROD OF IRON: AND HER CHILD WAS CAUGHT UP UNTO GOD, AND TO HIS THRONE. AND THE WOMAN FLED INTO THE WILDERNESS, WHERE SHE HATH A PLACE PREPARED OF GOD, THAT THEY SHOULD FEED HER THERE A THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND THREESCORE DAYS."—*Rev. xii. 1-6.*

WHAT strange objects the human imagination can create, or in a passive state receive! What a remarkable dream or

vision this is of the apostolic hermit on Patmos! "A woman arrayed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet

and a crown of twelve stars around her head, brings forth a man child. A huge scarlet dragon with ten horns and seven diademed heads, whose tail sweeps after it the third part of the stars to the earth, stands before her to devour the child the moment it is born, since the child is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. But the child is snatched up to the throne of God, and the woman flies into the wilderness, where she is nourished for 1,260 days." I shall take this strange creature of the imagination as I have taken the other visions—not to represent things of which we know nothing, but to *illustrate* some important realities with which we are more or less acquainted. There are two subjects here—*Social Christhood and Social Fiendhood*.

I.—SOCIAL CHRISTHOOD. By social Christhood I mean the existence of Christ in a human society, or in a community of men. I use this language in preference to the term Church, for that term now, alas! seldom represents Christhood, but often the reverse. The expressions in the Episcopal community "Our Church,"

and, in the Nonconformist domain, "Our Churches," are, alas! far enough from representing Christ, either in His doctrines, ethics, or spirit. Self-sacrificing love is the essence of Christhood; but where do we find that either in "our Church" or "our Churches"? Christhood is peace, eternal antipathy to all anger, resentment, ambition, war; but "*Our Church*" gives war a sanction, a licence, a blessing. The word Church, therefore, in its conventional sense, we repudiate as a calumny on Christ. Using this vision, therefore, to illustrate social Christhood, three remarks are suggested concerning the society or community in which Christ lives and works.

First: It is glorious. "*A woman clothed (arrayed) with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.*" It is encircled with the solar beams of Divine truth. Beneath the feet is the world. It treads down all worldliness in its spirit and aims. Around its brow, as a peerless diadem, are twelve stars. The *true* Church as a community of Christly men—Christly in

idea, spirit, and pursuit—is the most glorious object under the grand heavens. It reveals more of God than all the globes that roll through immensity. It is a *glorious Church*. The conventional Church is a crawling sycophant; the true Church is a crowned sovereign.

Secondly : It is multiplying. *"She being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."* The true Church is not sterile or barren, but otherwise—it is fecundant and multiplying. Three remarks are suggested concerning its offspring: (1) It is brought forth in pain. *"In pain to be delivered."* "All life," it has been said, "dawns in anguish, according to the fiat." (Gen. iii. 16.) There is an anguish of the Church which Christ laid upon her; it is the law of her life that she must bring forth Christ to the world, but she cannot work deliverance without knowing suffering. "Paul speaks of himself as "travailing in birth." Who knows the anguish of those earnestly engaged in endeavouring to form Christ in men, and to bring Him forth? What is

genuine, personal religion but Christ in men, working within them to "will and to do His own good pleasure." (2) It is brought forth to govern. *"And she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron."* Every Christly convert is a ruler; is born to rule. Servility and flunkeyism in all its forms are foreign to its instincts and spirit. His instincts and bearing are imperial. All the offspring of the true Church are Kings as well as "priests unto God." (3) It is destined for Divine fellowship. *"And her child was caught up unto God and to His throne."* Whatever might be the trials of the truly Christly, here is the end. Sublime destiny this. "God hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Though the mother had in her trials and persecutions to flee unto the "*wilderness*," even there she was secure. *"She had a place prepared of God."* The vision reveals—

II. — SOCIAL FIENDHOOD.

Not only is there a society on earth in which Christ is, but there is a society in which the

devil is. "*And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon having seven heads,*" &c. There is as truly a social Fiendhood as there is a social Christhood. The "*great red dragon,*" the old serpent, the "prince of the power of the air," works in the children of disobedience everywhere. Two facts are suggested by the highly symbolic and probably uninterpretable description here given of this fiend in human society.

First: *His possession of enormous power.* (1) Enormous power of intellect. "*Seven heads.*" The devil has a larger amount of human intellect at his command than Christ; sevenfold, peradventure, more. He has (2) Enormous power of execution. "*Ten horns.*" Horns are the emblems of force. How mighty is the devil amongst men. He works in all the navies and armies of the world. He has (3) Enormous power of Empire. "*Seven crowns (diadems) upon his heads.*" The human world abounds with chiefs and

princelets, and kings and queens; but in how many is there Christhood. The "*great red dragon*" seems to master most, if not all, the "kingdom of Satan" is all but world-wide. He has (4) Enormous power of mischief. "*And his tail drew (draweth) the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.*" There are stars in the moral firmament of the human soul, stars of social love, of reverent piety, of moral intuition, of spiritual insight, of infinite worship. These stars Satan sweeps away and leaves us to grope our way in nocturnal gloom. Where are these stars seen in the political management of England to-day? Truly we are walking in darkness and have no light.* The description of this fiend here suggests—

Secondly: *His determined antagonism to Christhood.* It is said, "*The dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*" It is against Christ in His true Church,

* Read in the journals of last week the conduct of our army amongst the Soudanese; also a little work entitled, "Spoiling the Egyptians."

Christ in His few but multiplying progeny, that this "great red dragon" stood.

CONCLUSION.—This determined and active antagonism between Social Christhood and Social Fiendhood is a commentary on the old text, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and

between thy seed and her seed." It explains, moreover, all domestic conflicts, all political battlings, and national wars. Evil and good are at war on this earth. This is the grand campaign, inspiring and explaining all other feuds.

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No. XXIII.

The Great Campaign.

"AND THERE WAS WAR IN HEAVEN: MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS FOUGHT AGAINST THE DRAGON; AND THE DRAGON FOUGHT AND HIS ANGELS, AND PREVAILED NOT; NEITHER WAS THEIR PLACE FOUND ANY MORE IN HEAVEN. AND THE GREAT DRAGON WAS CAST OUT, THAT OLD SERPENT, CALLED THE DEVIL, AND SATAN, WHICH DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD: HE WAS CAST OUT INTO THE EARTH, AND HIS ANGELS WERE CAST OUT WITH HIM. AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE SAYING IN HEAVEN, NOW IS COME SALVATION, AND STRENGTH, AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, AND THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST: FOR THE ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN IS CAST DOWN, WHICH ACCUSED THEM BEFORE OUR GOD DAY AND NIGHT. AND THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB, AND BY THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY; AND THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO THE DEATH,"—*Rev. xii. 7-11.*

THERE is undoubtedly "*war in heaven*," in the heaven of our being. War in the soul individually, war in the soul collectively, war within and war without. We "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers of this world; against wickedness in high places." The vision brings to our notice the contending armies and the contending issues.

I.—The ARMIES in the contest. Who are the armies? "*Michael and his angels fought* (going forth to war) *against the dragon; and the dragon fought* (warred) *and his angels.*" Many expositors will tell us all about Michael and the dragon and their angels, but I cannot. I take them as the ever-acting representatives of good and evil. Both have their leaders, their

Michaels, and their dragons with their respective followers or angels. Christ and His disciples represent the one. He is the "Captain of salvation," all His disciples are enlisted as His soldiers, they are inspired with His purpose and fight under His banner. The "*dragon*," called the devil and Satan, and his votaries represent the other. There is not a man who breathes who is not actively engaged in one or other of those armies. The grand question to determine is, "who is on the Lord's side"? The side of moral reality, right, and benevolence. "He that is not with Me is against Me." Notice—

II.—The ISSUES of the contest.

First: The one army was *utterly discomfited*. What became of them? "*And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*" The prince of this world is cast out. A stronger than he has entered the palace, and he is overcome, and "hath taken from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divided his spoils."

"Him, the Almighty power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from the
ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion,
down
To bottomless perdition; there to
dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to
arms."—*Milton*

Secondly: The other army was *sublimely triumphant*. Observe (1) The triumphant song. "*And I heard a loud (great) voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength (power), and the kingdom of our God.*" The celestial pæan proclaims the deliverance of man, the reign of God, and the adoration of Christ, and portrays in graphic delineation the miserable victim as the "*accuser of our brethren before God day and night.*" (2) The triumphant weapons. How was the victory won? (a) By the life of Christ. "*The blood of the Lamb.*" What meaneth this? * (b) By the word of truth. "*By the word of their testimony.*" The Divine word is the all-conquering sword. (c) By self-sacrificing love. "*They loved not their lives unto the death.*" Self-sacrificing love is the inspiring spirit in this warfare.

* See *Homilist*, Vol. xlv., page 327. Also see Breviary in this number.

CONCLUSION.—Evil on this earth, though it is strong, has the multitude and the empire on its side, though it has lived long, won victories, and is active and vigorous to this hour, it will not live for ever; its doom is sealed, its head is

bruised, its limbs are withering, and its death approaches. What Christ Himself saw will one day be witnessed by an adoring universe. "I saw Satan fall like lightning," &c.

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No. XXIV.

The Defeatibility of the Devil.

"THEREFORE REJOICE, YE HEAVENS, AND YE THAT DWELL IN THEM. WOE TO THE INHABITERS OF THE EARTH AND OF THE SEA! FOR THE DEVIL IS COME DOWN UNTO YOU, HAVING GREAT WRATH, BECAUSE HE KNOWETH THAT HE HATH BUT A SHORT TIME. AND WHEN THE DRAGON SAW THAT HE WAS CAST UNTO THE EARTH, HE PERSECUTED THE WOMAN WHICH BROUGHT FORTH THE MAN CHILD. AND TO THE WOMAN WERE GIVEN TWO WINGS OF A GREAT EAGLE, THAT SHE MIGHT FLY INTO THE WILDERNESS, INTO HER PLACE, WHERE SHE IS NOURISHED FOR A TIME, AND TIMES, AND HALF A TIME, FROM THE FACE OF THE SERPENT. AND THE SERPENT CAST OUT OF HIS MOUTH WATER AS A FLOOD AFTER THE WOMAN, THAT HE MIGHT CAUSE HER TO BE CARRIED AWAY OF THE FLOOD. AND THE EARTH HELPED THE WOMAN, AND THE EARTH OPENED HER MOUTH, AND SWALLOWED UP THE FLOOD WHICH THE DRAGON CAST OUT OF HIS MOUTH. AND THE DRAGON WAS WROTH WITH THE WOMAN, AND WENT TO MAKE WAR WITH THE REMNANT OF HER SEED, WHICH KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST."

—Rev. xii. 12-17.

THIS portion of John's vision illustrates four facts of great importance and of vital interest to all men.

I.—THAT MIGHTY AS IS THE MASTER-FIEND OF EVIL HE IS NOT PROOF AGAINST DEFEATS. "*Therefore rejoice ye (O) heavens, and ye that dwell in them.*"

First: Here is a defeat

implied. The efforts of this matchless fiend, however wisely directed and mightily wrought, are evermore exposed to failure. There is nothing permanent in error, there is no stability in wrong. All systems untrue to fact, unrighteous in principle are but houses on the sand of time. The laws of the universe flow

in ever-increasing volume against wrong. The devil is truly a defeatable agent, he has no power over those who are prepossessed with goodness. "The prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in me." The command is, "Resist the devil and he will flee from thee." As light extends and virtue grows, all schemes of wrong, political, social, and religious, crack to pieces and tumble to ruin.

Secondly: Here is a defeat righteously exultable. "*Rejoice ye heavens.*" In whatever heaven this defeat is witnessed, whether in the individual soul or in the social circle, it is a reason for rejoicing. In every error corrected, in every prejudice crushed, in every unholy purpose broken, in every impure impulse conquered, there comes to the soul the command, "*Rejoice ye heavens.*" It is the joy of the prisoner quitting his cell, of the patient returning to health. The vision illustrates the fact—

II.—THAT GREAT AS HIS DEFEATS MAY BE THEY DO NOT QUENCH HIS ANIMOSITY. "*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil*

is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Hunted from one arena he enters another, flaming with indignation, and the more so as he feels that his time for work is shortening. "*He hath but a short time.*" "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest and findeth none." He is "a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour." As every defeat enfeebles his power, contracts his reign, and decreases his opportunities, his malign nature becomes more intense in hatred. Like the ravenous beast of the desert, his failure to fasten his tusks in one victim whets his appetite for another. Evil is insatiable. This vision illustrates the fact—

III.—THAT HIS ANIMOSITY IS ESPECIALLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE TRUE CHURCH. "*And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*" Let the woman stand as an emblem of the true Church, or Christly men collectively, and we have

before us a picture of the mighty fiend tormenting it and its progeny. We read that "*the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood (river) after the woman.*" And again, "*the dragon was (waxed) wroth with the woman, and went (away) to make war with the remnant (rest) of her seed.*" What on this earth doth he hate most and yearn to crush? Not politics, learning, commerce, science, literature, art. None of these as such, but the Christly in men. Wherever the Spirit of Christ, is the spirit of tenderness, humility, self-sacrificing love, this he hates and seeks to destroy. On such he "*pours out water as a flood*" (river) that he may "*cause them to be carried away of the flood*" (stream). Who shall say what he pours forth from his mouth? False accusations, pernicious errors, social persecutions, &c. This vision illustrates the fact—

IV.—THAT THE TRUE CHURCH EVEN IN TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES IS UNDER THE SPECIAL PROTECTION OF

HEAVEN. "*And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.*" Notice—

First: The Church is in the wilderness. "*That she might fly into the wilderness.*" The home of Christly men on this earth has always been more of a wilderness than a Canaan; intricate, dangerous, gloomy.

Secondly: Though in the wilderness, it has enormous privileges. (1) It is endowed with *heaven-soaring power*. "*To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle.*" It is endowed with soaring instincts and faculties. Like the eagle the Church has the power to rise from the earth, penetrate the clouds, and bask in azure. "*It can mount up on wings as eagles.*" (2) It has the *whole earth to serve it*. "*And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth,*" &c.*

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

* See Breviary in present number.

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Mark iv. 35 to v. 21.

(*The Second Sunday in Lent.*)

THE LESSON FOR ST. DAVID'S DAY.

THESE verses contain the record of *Two Storms*. We notice—

I.—THAT STORMS IN THE MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL REALM ARE VERY FREQUENT. The storm on the Lake of Galilee finds its counterpart on some portion of the world's surface, I suppose, every hour. Tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, gales, turbulent seas,—how common they are! Nature is not tame, spiritless, but apparently full of passion. The other storm in the whole nature of the man who was dwelling among the tombs has its counterpart too every hour. Human nature, possessed by unclean spirits, is moaning, struggling, wounding itself, and spreading terror in every city and almost every hamlet of the world. Humanity is very stormful.

II.—THAT THESE STORMS PRODUCE GREAT TERROR. The disciples in the boat that the waves threaten to engulf are but a handful of the multitudes of men into whom material nature has again and again carried wild alarms. Often

man seems the sport and prey of material nature. The tameless evil spirit in the wanderer among the tombs is but a type of the daring spirit of evil in men which defies our laws, outrages our order, violates our institutions, mocks our futile philanthropies.

III.—THAT THESE STORMS CAN BE ALLAYED BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. He whose gentle whisper—"Peace, be still"—hushed the fury of the Galilean Lake, is still Lord of nature. It is He by whom the worlds were made. Science cannot quell material storms. Divine power alone can. And, again, He who delivered the devil-possessed man from his frenzy and brought him "*sitting*"—not restlessly wandering, and "*clothed*"—not weirdly naked, and "*in his right mind*"—not filled with the chaotic spirit of evil, is ever similarly quelling the storms of sin, of lust, of dread, and stretching over souls the benign sceptre of the Prince of Peace.

IV.—THAT THE QUELLING OF HUMAN STORMS CALLS FORTH HIGHER EFFORT, AND INVOLVES GREATER SACRIFICE THAN THE

HUSHING OF MATERIAL STORMS. A word, and the lake is tranquilised. Much longer is the process by which the demoniac is pacified. And what sacrifice of property and of life is involved. EDITOR.

Mark viii. 12.

(The Third Sunday in Lent).

FROM THE MORNING LESSON.

“HE SIGHED.”

THERE is scarcely less pathos in the “sigh” of Jesus than in His groans or in His tears. Indeed words would fail to tell how much gentle, yet strong and deep woe can be uttered in a sigh. This sigh of the Saviour was—

I.—A sigh of WONDER. We read at other times how He was amazed, how He marvelled. We must remember that “He grew in wisdom,” and the revelations of human stolidity, of human unbelief that from time to time met him, astonished Him. Now, after a miracle by which thousands had benefitted, and had benefitted just in the direction that most men most appreciate, the Pharisees still come asking Him a sign. Like the leech, and like the grave, which Solomon says seem evermore to cry “give, give,” these men were ravenous for more signs.

II.—A sigh of PITY. He knew they were craving for what they would not get; or that the more they had of signs the more they would crave and still be unsatisfied. This meant so much hardness of heart, so much blindness of mental vision, so much misery of doom, that the tenderest chords of His heart were touched, and the response was a profound sigh of compassion.

III.—A sigh of SORROW. All sighs mean sorrow. The wonder they utter is a sad wonder; the pity they breathe is the pity of a bleeding heart. The sorrow here seems to have been (1) Sorrow for *them*. “The generation” was filling up its measure of condemnation. The signs they would yet see would be signs that would condemn them. (2) Sorrow for *His own coming Passion and Death*. Of this He speaks, though in veiled language, when He alludes to the sign of Jonas, the three-days’-buried prophet. Jesus was no stoic. To Him death meant death. At one time He shrank from death. Was not this in no slight degree the meaning of this “sigh”? “Was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow”?

EDITOR.

Mark xii. 13.—(R. V.)*(The Fourth Sunday in Lent.)*

FROM THE MORNING LESSON.

“THAT THEY MIGHT CATCH HIM
IN TALK.”

THIS conduct of the Pharisees and of the Herodians towards our Great Lord may be pondered with much advantage by us. For—

I.—HERE IS A COMMON DEVICE OF ENMITY. When these malign men were devising questions by which they might catch Jesus in talk, they were but proceeding on lines that are very common with men of their animus. How continually is the same art adopted by (1) *Ecclesiastical* foes. (2) *Political* opponents. (3) *Personal* enemies. Nothing is much more common than to find men endeavouring by misrepresentation, or by unfair criticism, to make their opponents’ “talk” seem foolish, or false, or self-contradictory. How unworthy! How weak!

II.—Here is a common device of enmity THAT IS FREQUENTLY SUCCESSFUL. Very few men are so thoroughly equipped with perfect accuracy, far-reaching information, absolute truthfulness in conversation or in argument as to make it impossible for clever opponents to “catch” them. It only requires a little inaccuracy

on the part of a man, and a very little unscrupulousness on the part of his opponent, for reputation to be undermined and influence destroyed. Make a man an offender for a word; it is an easy thing. Every day in parliament, in the press, in the church, in the home this low cunning has its successes.

III.—Here is a common and often successful device COMPLETELY VANQUISHED BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. As on other occasions, so now, the malicious design of the Pharisees and Herodians was baffled. At other times, and here (read the dialogue that follows) Jesus does not evade their endeavours by silence. No, He freely talks. But (1) He *baffles* their attempt by giving them no opportunity for framing a solid indictment against His words. They could not contrive any charge they could substantiate even when they eventually carried Him before the judge. “Never man spake like this man.” And (2) He *conquers* their device by making it subordinate to the great purpose of all His “talk.” Their cavils, and criticisms, and attacks but drew Him into yet loftier regions of doctrine. He made the wrath of man to praise Him. Again and again our Lord uttered some of His sublimest teaching, all unexpectedly, to

them and to their discomfiture and for the world's good, in reply to some silly, or captious, or cruel endeavour of His enemies to "catch Him in His talk."

EDITOR.

John viii. 46.

(*The Fifth Sunday in Lent.*)

FROM THE GOSPEL FOR THE DAY.

"WHICH OF YOU CONVICTETH ME OF SIN?"

IN this question we approach, from the side of His own consciousness, the great doctrine of *The Sinlessness of Jesus*. We may notice—

I.—The sinlessness of Jesus AS A FACT. As a fact it is (1) *Undoubted*. It is thus beyond all doubt (a) *From His own assertions*. He who was meek and lowly in heart with sublime egoism claimed to be sinless. "Many good works have I shown you." "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" &c. (b) *From the testimony of Scripture*. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," &c. (c) *From the record of His life*. No stain, no shadow there. (d) *From the verdict of His enemies*. "I find no fault in this man." This is the verdict of the ages as well as of Pilate, "He is a tried stone." As a fact it is (2) *Unique*. In this He is alone. Adam was holy,

but fell. "In the long roll of ages," says Robertson, "there is but one man we can love without disappointment and worship without idolatry—The Man Christ Jesus." (3) *Glorious*. It is the crown of Humanity and the highest revelation of God. In Him God is well pleased; in Him is your joy and boast.

II.—The sinlessness OF JESUS AS AN ARGUMENT. Since He, out of the millions of men, can alone challenge a world of critics with the question, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" we are led to regard the Saviour's sinlessness (1) *As a guarantee*. (a) His word is authoritative. (b) His work is effectual. (2) *As a recollection*. His character throws us back to the world's golden age. We have no ample record of the life of unfallen man, but in Jesus we realise what it may have been. (3) *As a prediction*. His sinlessness, far more than any number of quotations from prophets, or visions of poets, or theories of moralists, enables us to realise what perfected humanity will be. In a twofold sense the sinlessness of Jesus is our hope. (a) *Through Him we shall become pure*. (b) *Like Him we shall be pure*. "Every one that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

EDITOR.

John viii. 51.

(The Fifth Sunday in Lent.)

"VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, IF A MAN KEEP MY SAYING HE SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH."

THE promises of God are like stars; they brighten the path which, without their light, would often be very dark and cheerless. But to do this they must be seen, grasped, and understood. Faith sees and appropriates them, while reason fathoms and makes plain their meaning. Let us try to get at the meaning of the promise in our text and of the condition upon which it is made, for until we understand what it says it can be of no use to us.

I.—THE PROMISE. Our interpretation of the promise will depend upon the meaning we give to the word death. (1) Death usually stands on physical dissolution—the separation of soul and body. Taken in this sense, the text asserts that the Christian shall pass from earth to heaven, like Enoch and Elijah, without having to go through that mysterious experience we call death. But the testimony of the Church through all the ages that have elapsed since these words were spoken, is that the Christian has not escaped the corrupting hand of physical death, but that like all other men he has had to submit

to its sway. Clearly, then, deliverance from physical dissolution cannot be the meaning of this promise, unless indeed we are prepared to admit that it has remained unfulfilled. (2) But the word death has another and a deeper meaning. It is in this second and deeper sense that it is often used in John's writings. Just as with him life means a great deal more than mere physical existence, so death means much more than physical dissolution. There is a spiritual death of which physical death is but the symbol. To have no knowledge of God, no faith in Him, no love for Him, and to be satisfied with this; to live without love or even compassion for our fellow men; to have no reverence for right and duty, no hatred of evil; to be blind to the true beauty of goodness and virtue; in one word, to be absorbed in the world of sense and insensible to the spiritual and eternal realities. What is this but death? A more awful death than that we are accustomed to regard with such terror. So all the world's dead do not lie in her churchyards. There are deaths of which the Registrar has no knowledge, secret funerals where no mourners follow save sorrowing angels. Dead men surround us, pass us in the street, meet us in the house,

sit beside us in the church. (3) Clearly it is in this latter sense we must understand the word death here. So then we are assured that obedience to Christ's teaching shall save us from spiritual death.

II.—THE CONDITION. (1) God's promises have conditions attached to them either expressed or implied. These are not arbitrary conditions that God has imposed as a kind of duty upon all the blessings He imparts, they are rendered necessary by the nature of things; according to the laws which govern the physical and spiritual worlds, these conditions must be observed before the promises can be fulfilled. (2) The condition attached to this promise is obedience to the teaching of Christ. Knowledge will not do, admiration is not enough. There must be practical obedience; the daily life must be brought into conformity with the "word" of Christ as exhibited in His life and teaching. (3) We can now see how this condition is a necessary one. Education expands and trains the mind, increases our capacity for receiving pleasure, makes us find beauty, delight where we never saw them before, in fact, begets in us a new life and ushers us into a new world. Obedience to Christ is a spiritual education, it develops the spirit-

ual nature, trains and expands the soul. It destroys selfishness, that spiritual cancer, and makes faith strong, hope fervent, love warm. It gives to us eternal life. And the greater includes the less, they who possess eternal life can never see death.

W. H. SKINNER.

BRISTOL.

Matthew xxvi. 39.

(*Palm Sunday.*)

"NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS THOU
WILT."

IN these words the key-note of our Lord's earthly life is struck. He came and lived not to do His own will, but the will of the Father. The lesson of our text is sadly needed in these days, for obedience such as we there see is looked upon with suspicion as something unworthy of man's dignity. But true greatness is ever found in obedience. Obedience was the glory of the age of chivalry, and it is one of the sublimest things in Christ's glorious life.

I.—We are taught to obey God's will and not our own. (1) There is here perfect submission to God's will. Christ, however, did not merely *submit* to the Divine will,

but He also sought to *fulfil* it. We must not only passively submit when God ordains what is unpalatable, but also actively help to carry out His will. Where God's purposes clash with ours, most of us do not get beyond the submission stage, while many never reach even that. (2) Christ's obedience was constant. Extending to every part and to every movement of His life. It was not grudging but willing, the obedience of a Son to the Father that he loves. Moreover, it was perfect. Man's obedience ought to possess these three qualities; it should be constant, willing, and perfect. The best, and indeed the only, way to obey God like this is to serve Him in love, to see always in His will the love of the Father. (3) Let us be careful not to confound God's will with our ignorance, and so bow submissively to what is not His doing at all. We often attribute to God evils that are the result of carelessness, defective sanitary arrangements, and violations of the laws of health. (4) To bow to and to do God's will we must know it, and to know it we shall have to observe, to read, to think, and to pray.

II.—Such obedience to God is man's duty. God's laws are the expression of God's character,

and, therefore, they are right and just and ought to be obeyed. And so, though no reward followed them, though they involved suffering and even death, it would be our duty to obey them. Duty and not hope of reward should be the main motive that leads to obedience.

III.—It is also man's truest wisdom. In the outside world we recognise the fact that to be successful we must work in harmony with natural law, which is God's will in the physical world. To work without the help of law is to fail, and to work against it is sure to lead to suffering. But we do not recognise that this is universally true. That obedience to God in the mental, moral, and spiritual worlds, no less than in the world of matter, always, in the long run, leads to success and happiness, while disobedience always ends in failure and sorrow. Let us then cease to pose as martyrs and talk about the sacrifice we make when God's will clashes with ours and we surrender our cherished plans. There is no sacrifice in giving up the wrong for the right, failure for success, sorrow for joy.

W. H. SKINNER.

BRISTOL.

Breviaries.

The Church on the Rock.

“UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH, AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.”—*Matt. xvi. 18.*

EXEGETES and critics have been wielding their spades and pick-axes about “this rock” for ages, but have never been able to agree as to its actual size and composition. I.—The NATURE of the Christian Church. Loosely considered, the Church is composed of all who make a public profession of religion. But the Church on the “rock” is composed only of those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour. II.—The OWNER of the Christian Church. “My Church.” (1) His by covenant engagement. (2) His by costly purchase. (3) His by actual conquest. (4) His by its origin. “I will build.” (5) His by Divine oversight and providential care. III.—The FOUNDATION of the Christian Church. “This rock.” (1) It is a *lasting* foundation. “Rock.” (2) It is a *specific* foundation. “This rock.” (3) It is under and, therefore, rightly related to the Church. “Upon this rock.” Any other foundation would crumble and give way under the tremendous, inconceivable pressure. The Church is “built upon this rock.” (1) For safety. (2) Firmness. (3) Elevation. (4) Strength. (5) Durability. (6) Conquest. IV.—The SAFETY of the Christian Church. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” 1. *Implied opposition.* “The gates of hell.” (1) By this expression we may understand the *ravages of death*. Jesus was about to pass through those gates, but He would have Peter and the rest know that the faith just confessed need not waver as He passed. Peter and the rest would soon be dashed through those gates by the bloody hand of persecution, but still the living Church would live on. (2) The gates of hell also means the *wisdom of hell*. Gates of ancient cities being the seat of council where judges, jurors, and lawyers met. (3) The decisions and *condemnations of hell*. The gates being the place of censure and condemnation. (4) The strength and *defences of hell*. Gates of ancient cities denoting power and protection. 2. *Assured safety.* “Shall not prevail against it.” (1) The love and power of God. (2) The sacrifice and intercession of Jesus Christ. (3) The Divine Spirit and promises all declare “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

SHORT NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

(No. 5.) Soul Salvation.

“RECEIVING THE END OF YOUR FAITH, EVEN THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS. CONCERNING WHICH SALVATION THE PROPHETS SOUGHT AND SEARCHED DILIGENTLY, WHO PROPHESED OF THE GRACE THAT SHOULD COME UNTO YOU : SEARCHING WHAT TIME OR WHAT MANNER OF TIME THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST WHICH WAS IN THEM DID POINT UNTO, WHEN IT TESTIFIED BEFOREHAND THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, AND THE GLORIES THAT SHOULD FOLLOW THEM. TO WHOM IT WAS REVEALED, THAT NOT UNTO THEMSELVES, BUT UNTO YOU, DID THEY MINISTER THESE THINGS, WHICH NOW HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED UNTO YOU THROUGH THEM THAT PREACHED THE GOSPEL UNTO YOU BY THE HOLY GHOST SENT FORTH FROM HEAVEN ; WHICH THINGS ANGELS DESIRE TO LOOK INTO.”—1 *Peter* i. 9-12.

THE topic of soul salvation is by no means superficial or selfish, it is the deepest and most far-reaching we can contemplate. This passage opens to us I.—The great WORTH of soul salvation. This is seen (1) *from the illustrious beings interested in it.* (a) *Prophets.* Their business, as their name indicates, was twofold,—to proclaim and to predict. They “spoke forth” much, “foretold” much concerning the soul, its salvation, and its Saviour. (b) *Angels.* Beings of exalted intelligence, benevolence, devotion bend over to see this. (b) *Apostles.* Men “sent forth” on the noble errand. (d) *The Spirit of Christ in them all.* The Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven. From all this we conclude that soul salvation is *no modern invention*, ancient prophets spake of it ; *no mean conception*, exalted angels cared for it ; *no obscure dream*, apostles who were eye-witnesses testified concerning itself and its author ; *no mere earthly thought*, it is revealed and wrought by the Divine One, “the Holy Ghost.” But its great worth is seen as we consider (2) *the Saviour Himself by whom salvation comes.* Christianity is the method for saving souls, and Christ is Christianity. As concerned in soul salvation, the apostle speaks of (a) Christ’s *sufferings.* (b) Christ’s *following glories.* II.—THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVELATION FOR SOUL SALVATION. It is (1) *predicted.* By the prophets (a) gradually and partially, (b) unconsciously, (c) by Divine illumination. (2) *Fully declared*, announced, and reported. “These things were not done in a corner.” III.—THE SIMPLE MEANS OF

ATTAINING SOUL SALVATION. Salvation is (1) the thing for which we believe. (2) The end to which belief leads. This faith is (a) *assent of the mind.* (b) *Consent of the heart.* (c) *Response of the will.* It is, as Peter's experience indicated and as his doctrine taught, a loving trust and a trusting love. "Believe and be saved." EDITOR.

(No. 6.) The Call to Holiness.

"WHEREFORE GIRDING UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND, BE SOBER AND SET YOUR HOPE PERFECTLY ON THE GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT UNTO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST; AS CHILDREN OF OBEDIENCE, NOT FASHIONING YOURSELVES ACCORDING TO YOUR FORMER LUSTS IN THE TIME OF YOUR IGNORANCE: BUT LIKE AS HE WHICH CALLED YOU IS HOLY, BE YE YOURSELVES ALSO HOLY IN ALL MANNER OF LIVING; BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN, YE SHALL BE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY. AND IF YE CALL ON HIM AS FATHER, WHO WITHOUT RESPECT OF PERSONS JUDGETH ACCORDING TO EACH MAN'S WORK, PASS THE TIME OF YOUR SOJOURNING IN FEAR."—1 *Peter* i. 13-17.

THE apostle sums up as the conclusion from what he has just written as to prophets, apostles, angels, and the very Spirit of Christ being deeply concerned in our salvation, "Be holy." Salvation to the sick man is health, to the enslaved man is pardon, to the ignorant man is knowledge; so to the sinful man it is holiness. Peter here sets forth I.—THE ONE MODEL AND MOTIVE OF TRUE HOLINESS. Does he not in passing show (1) what is *not* a standard of holiness. (a) He guards his readers against shaping their character by their own past habits of character. He gently recalls the fact that they had lived lives of vice and ignorance, and warns them that such living was according to the "lusts," dark and coarse of men, and not "the law," supreme and perfect of God. (b) Then he shows them what the real manifestation of true holiness will be. "Holy in all manner of living." The word, "conversation," indicates that wherever life revolves in its daily orbit it will be holy. The holy man is a revolving light with no side darkened. Then Peter shows (2) who *is* the standard of such holiness. God. "He which called you." We are taught here (a) *because of God's nature it is right man should resemble Him.* Man always becomes like his God. So mythologies and idolatries witness. And he ought to become like the true God. (b) *Because of man's nature it is*

possible for him to resemble God. The fact that the apostles exhort it prove it is a possibility, unless each of them is a Tantalus instead of an inspired teacher. "It is written" everywhere "resemble God." II.—SOME OF THE ESSENTIALS IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUE HOLINESS. Peter, according to his mental habit, unlike Paul's, does not deal exhaustively with these essentials, but he enumerates several. (1) *Vigorous intelligence.* "Gird up the loins of your mind." (2) *Firm self-control.* "Be sober." (3) *Thorough hope.* "Hope to the end," i.e., to the very limit of hope. (4) *Filial obedience.* "Children of obedience." Holiness found its highest ideal in Him who was "obedient unto death." Practical obedience is the source and sign of a holy life.

EDITOR.

(No. 7.) The Awe of the Redeemed.

"AND IF YE CALL ON HIM AS FATHER, WHO WITHOUT RESPECT OF PERSONS JUDGEETH ACCORDING TO EACH MAN'S WORK, PASS THE TIME OF YOUR SOJOURNING IN FEAR: KNOWING THAT YE WERE REDEEMED, NOT WITH CORRUPTIBLE THINGS, WITH SILVER OR GOLD, FROM YOUR VAIN MANNER OF LIFE HANDED DOWN FROM YOUR FATHERS; BUT WITH PRECIOUS BLOOD, AS OF A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT, EVEN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST: WHO WAS FOREKNOWN INDEED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, BUT WAS MANIFESTED AT THE END OF THE TIMES FOR YOUR SAKE, WHO THROUGH HIM ARE BELIEVERS IN GOD, WHICH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND GAVE HIM GLORY; SO THAT YOUR FAITH AND HOPE MIGHT BE IN GOD."—1 *Peter* i. 17-21. (*R.V.*)

THE one injunction of this passage is, "Pass your time in fear." "In fear" does not mean in dread. That meaning is contradicted by the whole tenor of the epistle, specially by the context, and by here naming God, "Father." It is rather "awe," the right feeling not only towards what is sublime, but towards all that is great. You are in the midst of stupendous realities, "fear." There is I.—Awe of the redeemed TOWARDS THE REDEEMING GOD. "If ye call on Him as Father." Not simply *appeal* to Him, but *acknowledge* His relationship to you, *admit* His claims on you. He is not a partial Parent, for without respect of persons He judges according to each man's work. Leighton well puts it, "It is not cowardice or superstition; it drowns all lower fear and begets true fortitude. The righteous dare do anything but offend God." II.—Awe

of the redeemed BECAUSE OF THEIR RECOLLECTION OF THE EVIL FROM WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN REDEEMED. There is (a) a consciousness of being redeemed. "Knowing." (b) A consciousness of being redeemed from a habit of living. "Conversation." (c) A consciousness of being redeemed from a habit of life that was evil. "Vain," i.e., hollow, empty, useless. (d) A consciousness of being redeemed from an evil habit of life that was inherited, "handed down from your fathers." Remembering all that, they may well "stand in awe and sin not." III.—Awe of the redeemed BECAUSE OF THE COST BY WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN REDEEMED. (1) *This cost in contrast with the wealth of this world.* "Not" with silver and gold. (2) *This cost as revealed in Jesus Christ.* (a) His nature, "Lamb without spot." (b) His sacrifice, "precious blood." (3) *This cost as known to the Infinite heart of the Eternal God.* "Foreknown," &c. Science is busy computing the ages of the past; Scripture does not say how long this was foreknown, but by whom. The cross of Christ was always in the heart of God. (4) *This cost had the approval of God.* "Who raised Him from the dead." (5) *All this cost was incurred for man's sake.* "For your sake." IV.—Awe of the redeemed BECAUSE OF THE DESTINY TO WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN REDEEMED. Faith and hope in God. God, the impregnable fortress, the enduring home. EDITOR.

(No. 8.) The Life of Love and Purity.

"SEEING YE HAVE PURIFIED YOUR SOULS IN OBEYING THE TRUTH THROUGH THE SPIRIT UNTO UNFEIGNED LOVE OF THE BRETHREN, SEE THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER WITH A PURE HEART FERVENTLY: BEING BORN AGAIN, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED, BUT OF INCORRUPTIBLE, BY THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH LIVETH AND ABIDETH FOR EVER. FOR ALL FLESH IS AS GRASS, AND ALL THE GLORY OF MAN AS THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERETH, AND THE FLOWER THEREOF FALLETH AWAY: BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOR EVER. AND THIS IS THE WORD WHICH BY THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED UNTO YOU."—1 *Peter* i. 22-25.

NOTICE here I.—MUTUAL LOVE THE DUTY OF THE PURE. "Seeing ye have purified your souls, love," &c. It is true there must be some love before there is purity, but the very end of becoming pure is not to become wise or happy, but more loving. "Ye have purified your souls." There are two aspects of purification, the one in which it is regarded as man's

work, the other in which it is regarded as the Divine work in man, and yet the two are one, for the first is the outcome of the second. "*Your souls*," not your garments, nor even your external behaviour only, which is but the garment of character. "*In your obedience to truth*." There is no purity except by obedience. "*Unto unfeigned love*," the very end of all is genuine love. "*From the heart*," not of hand only, or tongue, or outward conduct, but from the central source of your manhood. "*Fervently*." Intensely, with your powers on their stretch. II.—PURITY, OBEDIENCE, LOVE ARE THE SIGNS OF A NEW LIFE WHICH THE CHRISTIAN IS LIVING. (1) He is living a *new* life, "having been begotten again." The figures of complete turning round, *i.e.*, conversion; of emerging from death, *i.e.*, resurrection, of a new birth, *i.e.*, regeneration, are not too strong to describe the change of character, of motives, of purposes, of affections of the man who passes from the earthly and selfish to the Christly life. III.—THE FORCES OUT OF WHICH THIS NEW LIFE GROWS ARE DEATHLESS. "*Seed*;" (a) appears insignificant, (b) is often hidden, (c) is vital and vitalising. "Not corruptible," does not decay and perish, "incorruptible." Truth itself never dies, nor love. III.—THE WORD OF GOD IS THE IMPERISHABLE MEANS BY WHICH THESE FORCES OF LIFE ARE BROUGHT INTO THE VERY SOUL OF MAN "*through* the word of God." It is not the seed, but the vehicle by which the seed is communicated. The word of God conveys the seeds into the soul. But even the word of God is imperishable. It "*liveth and abideth*;" *i.e.*, lives and continues to live. This is in contrast with mortal life. "All flesh is as grass." "*And this* is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." The glad tidings is the imperishable word; others become obsolete. EDITOR.

Moral Conquest Won through Christ.

"THEY OVERCAME HIM BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB."—*Rev.* xii. 11.

It is trite, but ever solemnly true, to say that life is a combat. Moral antagonists of the soul meet us everywhere in all departments of life, circles of society, spheres of action. Nay, they rise up within us. These can be only overcome by the "blood of the Lamb," that is, by the self-sacrificing life of Christ. I.—It is through His blood (or life) that we get our antagonism to MORAL EVIL ROUSED. Where do we learn the turpitude, the enormity, the ruinousness of sin, as we learn it in the cross?

There, indeed, "sin appears exceeding sinful." When we are enabled to look upon it in the light of that cross, the whole soul rises in determined opposition to it. II.—It is through His blood (or life) that we get OUR WEAPONS SUPPLIED. What are the weapons with which evil is to be restored? First: *A clear knowledge of the right.* It is by right alone that wrong can be put down. His life was the intelligible embodiment, and the all-convincing demonstration of moral right. Second: An inflexible love for the right. Right as an idea is no weapon. But right as a love becomes a triumphant implement in this warfare. III.—It is through His blood (or life) that we get our courage inspired. In this warfare we require a courage unflagging and invincible: a courage impelling us to fight, even to the death. Whence cometh this? Only from Christ. His self-sacrificing spirit is the soul of all true courage.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Nature Serving Christianity.

"THE EARTH HELPED THE WOMAN."—*Revelation* xii. 16.

By common consent "the woman" here means redeemed humanity, or the children of God collectively, or, in other words, what is called the Church. (1) Her *appearance* is wonderful. "Clothed with the sun" (2) Her *progeny* is wonderful. "She brought forth a man child." (3) Her *antagonist* is wonderful. The devil is the great enemy of redeemed humanity, and the description given of him indicates that he is a being of stupendous force and malice. (4) Her *influence* is wonderful. Supernatural beings engage in fierce conflict on her account. There was war in heaven. The subject here is *nature serving Christianity*. The earth, nature,—"*helped the woman*"—embodied Christianity. Nature helps Christianity in various ways: I.—By its GRAND REVELATIONS. Nature reveals all the grand subjects that constitute the very foundation of Bible discoveries. (1) There is *God*. All nature proclaims not only His existence, but His personality, unity, spirituality, wisdom, goodness, power. (2) There is *law*. Every part is under the rigorous reign of law. Any infraction of nature's laws carries penalties. (3) There is *mediation*. The principle of mediation runs through all nature. One element, one agent, one being everywhere serving another. (4) There is *responsibility*. In the human world men are everywhere recognised as responsible, men everywhere feel their responsibility. (5) There is *mystery*. There is a

haze over all nature. Every part has arenas which no intellect can penetrate. The whole universe seems to float on the dark sea of mystery. Now all these subjects which we find in nature we find, also, in the Bible. Hence nature comes, also, to illustrate the meaning of the Bible and confirm its truth. It is a grand parable. Hence the earth helps the woman, nature helps Christianity. II.—By ITS MORAL IMPRESSIONS. Nature is suited to make impressions upon the earth corresponding exactly with those which Christianity essays to produce. First : *Sense of dependence*. How infinitely little man feels beside the great hills, confronting the great hills, confronting the ocean billow, and under the awful stars. Amidst the majesty of nature's appearances he feels himself to be nothing and less than nothing. He feels borne along as a straw upon the resistless flood of destiny. Secondly : *Reverence*. How great does God appear in nature, in the minute as well as the vast. An undevout astronomer is mad. There is a spirit in nature that seems to say to every thoughtful soul, "Take thy shoes from off thy feet," &c. Thirdly : *Contrition*. The streams of Divine goodness seem to well up from every blade, flow down on every ray, beat in every wave of air, and are vocal with reproof to guilty man for his ingratitude and disobedience towards his Maker. Fourthly : *Worship*. In reason's ear a thousand voices speak to man. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, sing forth the honour of His name." Now these are just the impressions that the Gospel aims to produce ; and thus nature serves Christianity by endeavouring to produce the same spiritual results ; and in this way, again, the earth helps the woman. Nature serves Christianity. III.—By its MULTIPLIED INVENTIONS. Men by studying nature and employing its laws, elements, and forces, for their intellectual and temporal uses, have attained those arts which are highly conducive to the advancement of Christianity. First : There is *merchandise*. Trade brings the remotest nations together in a common interest. The means for exporting commodities are available for exporting the Word of God. Secondly : There is the *Press*. The press is an invention of nature, and an invention which is admirably suited to advance Christianity. It has already borne the Gospel to the most distant part of the earth. Thirdly : There is *painting* ; the art by which man transforms the forms of nature, and embodies his own conception of beauty on the canvas. By this noble art the scenes and characters of the Bible, and even our blessed Lord Himself, are brought with a vivid reality under the notice of men. Fourthly : There is *music* ; the magic art which catches the floating sounds of nature and weaves them into

strains of melody that stir the deepest feelings of the soul. Never does truth come with such strange majesty to the heart as when it comes floating on the wave of melody. Fifthly : There is *government*. Government is of the earth, earthy ; but it helps Christianity. The Roman government, in the first ages, did it good service, and all civil governments that keep to their true province serve it now.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Out of Darkness into Light.

“THAT YE MAY SHOW FORTH THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT,—1 *Peter* ii. 9.

WE are called by God. Notice 1. What from. 2. What to. 3. What for. I.—WHAT FROM. “*Out of darkness.*” (1) *The power of Satan.* He is called the “*power of darkness.*” A moral anarchy, a revolt against God and righteousness, law and order, a spiritual tyranny, leading souls captive at his will. (2) *Moral confusion.* Man’s moral nature was made for “*law and order,*” made to love God and do right, made to honour God as his centre of moral attraction, but in the power of Satan he wanders away from God and right in confusion. (3) *Impurity*; “works of darkness.” “He that doeth evil hateth the light.” What impurity there is in the sinful heart where Satan rules. (4) *Spiritual loss—ignorance.* The loss of the Great Father’s face, the loss of His guiding hand, the loss of the rectitude in wholeness of our moral nature, the loss of the right path leading into the future. (5) *This is a state of misery.* The man who is in this darkness cannot be truly happy, he must be wretched and miserable. (6) *This is a state of danger.* The danger of the man who in the darkness of night wanders among the craggy cliffs of the mountain heights, is nothing to the danger of the man who lives without God and without hope. (7) *God calls us out of this darkness,* and if we do not obey His call we “love darkness rather than light, because our deeds are evil.” But let us count the cost of such a choice. II.—WHAT TO. “*His marvellous light.*” This is the contrast to the other. (1) *Into God’s kingdom.* “*God is light,*” and we may be admitted to His kingdom, taken from being Satan’s slaves to be God’s children. (2) *Moral order.* The mind lives in harmony with God, and in harmony with its nature,—

true happiness. (3) *True wisdom.* To know God and hold communion with God, and this is the highest wisdom and the greatest blessedness. "This is life eternal to know Thee the true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (4) *Spiritual purity.* "He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are," &c. Light is purifying, and God's felt presence purifies the moral atmosphere of the human heart. (5) *Heaven in prospective.* "Made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Hope of immortality. III.—WHAT FOR. "That ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you." (1) *That we shall be obedient to His will and follow the example of Christ,* God's ideal of perfected humanity. (2) *To live as His children* and render unto Him a loving, loyal service, bearing His gentle yoke with cheerfulness and meekness and so recommend the service of God by our conduct before men that they shall be drawn to God by our example (illustrate the mode). "Let your *light* so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

NEWENT.

W. HARRIS.

The First European Convert.

"A CERTAIN WOMAN NAMED LYDIA, A SELLER OF PURPLE," &c.—
Acts xvi. 14.

I.—HER CHARACTER. (1) Her name, "Lydia," right relation to Jesus. Christ gives immortality to the humblest name. (2) Her native place, "Thyatira." (3) Her place of business, "Philippi." (4) Her occupation, "seller of purple." (5) Her devout spirit, "Worshipped God." She was piously inclined, but not converted. She was honestly using the light she had, and, therefore, ready for more. II.—HER CONVERSION. It was brought about (1) By contact with the truth. "Heard us." (2) Prompt action. "She attended to the" (3) Divine interposition. "Whose heart the Lord opened." This opening was: (1) Gradual. (2) Instantaneous. Gradual in that she had so honestly followed the light she had; Instantaneous in that God specially helped her to receive the broader, grander, transforming truths of the Gospel. The first person in Europe that asked for the Gospel was a man. The first person converted was a woman.

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

Pulpit Handmaids.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

THE great difficulty heretofore encountered in establishing the faith of a supernatural agency, has been due to the fact that we have made a ghost of it; discussing it as if it were a marvel of superstition and no definite and credible reality. Whereas it will appear as we confront our difficulty more thoughtfully and take in its full force, that the moment we begin to conceive ourselves rightly we become ourselves supernatural. It is no longer necessary to go hunting after marvels, apparitions, suspensions of the laws of nature, to find the supernatural; it meets us in what is least transcendent and most familiar, even in ourselves. In ourselves we discover a tier of existences that are above nature, and in all their most orderly actions are doing their will upon it. The very idea of our personality is that of a being not under the law of cause and effect, a being supernatural. This one point clearly apprehended, all the difficulties of our subject are at once relieved, if not absolutely and completely removed. If anyone is startled or shocked by what appears to be the extravagance of this position, let him recur to our definition, namely, that *nature is the world of substance whose laws are laws of cause and effect, and whose events transpire in orderly succession under those laws; the supernatural is that range of substance, if any such there be, that acts upon the chain of cause and effect in nature from without the chain, producing thus results that by mere nature could not come to pass.* It is not said, be it observed, as is sometimes done, that the supernatural implies a suspension of the laws of nature, a causing them for the time not to be,—that, perhaps, is never done,—it is only said that we, as powers not in the line of cause and effect, can set the causes in nature at work in new combinations otherwise never occurring, and produce by our action upon nature results which she as nature could never produce by her own internal acting.

Illustrations are at hand without number. Thus nature, for example, never made a pistol, or gunpowder, or pulled a trigger; all which being done, or procured to be done, by the criminal in

his act of murder, he is hung for what is rightly called his unnatural deed. So of things not criminal; nature never built a house, or modelled a ship, or fitted a coat, or invented a steam engine, or wrote a book, or framed a constitution. These are all events that spring out of human liberty, acting in and upon the realm of cause and effect to produce results and combinations which mere cause and effect could not; and at some point of the process in each we shall be found coming down upon nature by an act of sovereignty just as peremptory and mysterious as that which is discovered in a miracle, only that a miracle is a similar coming down upon it from another and higher being and not from ourselves. Thus, for example, in the firing of a pistol we find materials brought together and compounded for making an explosive gas, an arrangement prepared to strike a fire into the substance compounded, an arm pulled back to strike the fire, muscles contracted to pull back the arm, a nervous telegraph running down from the brain, by which some order has been sent to contract the muscles; and then having come to the end of the chain of natural causes, the jury ask, who sent the mandate down upon the nervous telegraph ordering the said contraction? And having found, as is their true answer, that the arraigned criminal did it, they offer this as their verdict, and on the strength of the verdict he is hung. He had, in other words, a power to set in order a line of causes and effects, existing elementally in nature, and then, by a sentence of his will, to start the line, doing his unnatural deed of murder. If it be inquired how he was able to command the nervous telegraph in this manner, we cannot tell, any more than we can shew the manner of a miracle. The same is true in regard to all our most common actions. If one simply lifts a weight, overcoming thus far the great law of gravity, we may trace the act back in the same way; and if we do it we shall come at last to the man acting in his personal arbitrament, and shall find him sending down his mandate to the arm, summoning its contractions and sentencing the weight to rise, in which, as we perceive, he has just so much of power given him to vary the incidents and actings of nature as determined by her own laws, so much that is of power supernatural.

Finding now in this manner that we ourselves are supernatural

creatures and that the supernatural instead of being some distant ghostly affair is similar to us as our own most familiar action, also that nature as a realm of cause and effect is made to be acted on from without by us and all moral beings, thus to be the environment of our life, the instrument of our activity, the medium of our right or wrong doing toward each other, and so the school of our trial, a further question rises, namely, what will we think of God's relations to nature? If it be nothing incredible that we should act on the chain of cause and effect in nature, is it more incredible that God should thus act? Strange as it may seem this is the grand offence of supernaturalism,—the supposing that God can act on nature from without, on the chain of cause and effect in nature from without the chain of connection, by which natural causes are propagated—exactly that which we ourselves are doing as the most familiar thing in our lives! It involves too, as we can see at a glance, no disruption by us of the laws of nature, but only a new combination of its elements and forces, and need not any more involve such a disruption by Him. Nor can anyone show that a miracle of Christ (the raising, for example, of Lazarus) involves anything more than that nature is prepared to be acted on by a divine power just as it is to be acted on by a human in the making of gunpowder or the making and charging of a firearm. For though there seems to be an immense difference in the grade of the results accomplished, it is only a difference which ought to appear regarding the grade of the two agents by whom they are wrought. How different the power of two men, creatures though they be of the same order; a Newton, for example, a Watt, a Fulton, and some wild Patagonian or stunted Esquimaux. So if there be angels, seraphim, thrones, dominions, all in ascending scales of endowment above one another, they will, of course, have powers supernatural, or capacities to act on the lines of causes in nature that correspond with their natural quantity and degree. What wonder then is it, in the case of Jesus Christ, that He reveals a power over nature appropriate to the scale of His being and the inherent supremacy of His Divine person?

HORACE BUSHNELL, D.D.

The Recognition of Friends in Heaven.

WILL there be in that region of preparation, or in the ultimate blessedness of the saints, a mutual recognition among those who are thus partakers of the inheritance of the kingdom? That is, perhaps, of all questions that rise up in men's minds, as they look forward into the dim unseen, the one on which they most crave for certainty. The hopes of men, in Christian or pre-Christian times, have for the most part made answer to themselves. They have cherished the belief, as they laid their loved ones in the earth, that the parting was not to be for ever, that they should meet again under better and happier conditions, that misunderstandings and mistakes should no longer cloud the communion of soul with soul. They look back on the friendships of their lives, or the relationships which are closer than friendships, and feel how little they have really known of those even with whom they were in daily converse.

“Not e'en the tenderest bosom next our own
Knows half the reason why we smile or sigh.”

Every poet who has ever ventured to picture to himself the dwelling-place of the dead, from Homer to Dante, has shown that for him an immortality without recognition was a thing hardly conceivable. It is probably true of most Christians that, if they would utter truly what was in their hearts, they would confess that for them it would be hardly a thing to be desired. They would crave, even in the joy of the Beatific Vision, and still more in that which is preliminary and preparatory to it, for the joy, at once natural and spiritual, of the communion of saints.

And it is clear, I think, that, though we cannot point to distinctly revealed declarations that so it shall be, the whole drift of the teaching of the Scriptures tends in that direction. That teaching at least does not clash with the consentient hope of humanity. That hope may be found colouring its language, underlying its formal or informal statements. When David faces the death of the child, for whom he had fasted and prayed, with a restored cheerfulness, it is because he can say, “I shall go

to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. xii. 23). In the parable, which above all others is fruitful in its suggestiveness, Abraham and Lazarus and the rich man identify each other (Luke xvi. 19-31). Those who love darkness rather than light shall *see* men coming from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and sitting down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God (Luke xii. 28). Philemon was to receive back the fugitive Onesimus no longer as a slave, but as a brother beloved for *ever* (Philemon v. 15). The Seer of the Apocalypse recognises the four-and-twenty Elders and the hundred and forty-four thousand, and those whose names were in the Lamb's book of life, and those that were slain for the Word of God (Rev. iv. 4; vi. 9; vii. 4; xxi. 27). Can we form any conception of the life after death which shall include the idea of the communion of saints, the consciousness of belonging to the great family of God, of being members of the body of Christ, and yet exclude the thought of recognition? Are the personal affections, the love strong as death, the friendships stronger than death, that are the mightiest elements in the formation of our character now, to be cast aside when they have done their work, and leave us in an isolation that either knows no affections or finds no scope for their activity? Are the children of the Father to cease to know each other precisely at the moment when they enter into the Father's house?

DEAN PLUMPTRE.



WRONG USE OF ILLUSTRATION.—"To illustrate signifies to make clear. It would be well if writers would keep this in mind, and still better if preachers were to do so. They would then feel the necessity of suiting their illustrations to their hearers. As it is, illustrations often seem to be stuck in for the same reason as shrubs round stables and outhouses—to keep the meaning out of sight."—ARCHDEACON HARE.

Selected Acorns from Stalwart Oaks.

"The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end."
—*Carlyle*.

CHRISTIANITY AND ARBITRATION.—"The habits of arbitration in private matters were very early implanted among believers by the words of Jesus (Matt. xviii. 15-17) and the apostles (1 Cor. vi. 4-7). . . . The phrase is often repeated by the earlier Fathers that "*Jesus in disarming Peter disarmed all soldiers*."—LOVING BRACE.

THE OLDEST PROVERB.—"It appears from 1 Samuel xxiv. 13, that the oldest Proverb on record is, 'Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked,' since David declared it to be the Proverb of the ancients. Consequently, it must be older than any Proverb of his son Solomon."

PRAYER AND OLD AGE.—"People that pray in their youth and middle life, will never want for *one* useful occupation in their age. Quivering lips can even *sing* with a prayerful heart to help them."—LYNCH.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD AND SELF.—"The two knowledges of God and thyself are the highway to thy salvation; *that* breeds in thee a filial love; *this* a filial fear. The ignorance of thyself is the beginning of all sin, and the ignorance of God is the perfection of all evil."—QUARLES.

IDEAS AND WORDS.—"The inconvenience of words is that they are more marked in form than ideas. All ideas have indistinct boundary lines, words have not. A certain diffused phase—soul ever escapes words—*expression has its frontiers—thought has none*."

DANGERS OF PROSPERITY.—"Adversity is more easily resisted than prosperity. We rise more perfect from ill-fortune than from good. There is a Charybdis in poverty and a Scylla in riches. Those who remain erect under the thunder-bolt are prostrated by the flash."—HUGO.

CONSCIENCE—AN ANCHOR.—"There was an irresistible current and a reef. The reef was not a rock but a siren. A magnet at the bottom of the abyss . . . A man may be wrecked as in a ship—*Conscience is an anchor*—It is a terrible thing, but, like the anchor, even conscience may be carried away."—IBID.

THE PEACE OF GOD.—"For the pebbly roads of life, for the troubled fords of death, and for the unending travel of eternity, the feet need to be shod with *the preparation of peace*,—peace that springs from good news of past sins forgiven, good news of a strong friend who awaits us on every shore."—DR. ARTHUR.

THE ARMOUR OF SALVATION.—"For the battle with sin and sinful beings are needed the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, and the shield of faith, if at every turn of the struggle the head is to abide intact, covered with the shining helmet of salvation."—IBID.

BRISTOL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

Reviews.

THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN ; OR HOW TO MAKE THE CHILDREN SAINTS AND SOLDIERS OF JESUS CHRIST. By the GENERAL OF THE SALVATION ARMY. London : Salvation Army Book Stores, 8 and 9, Paternoster Square.

A few years ago the work of Mr. Spurgeon was thought a marvel in the religious world, but even his dwindles into insignificance compared with what has been wrought by Mr. and Mrs. Booth during the last few years. From the last Report of the "General's" work, ending September, 1884, we learn that the income for the year was over £74,000, and the whole of this large sum was spent, with the exception of a balance in hand of £448. The financial year 1883-4 started with a balance in favour of the building fund of £6,104; the total receipts on account of the General Spiritual Fund were £24,452, and the other sums received were:—For India, £734; for the Training Homes, £6,302; Rescue Home, £135; sick and wounded, £334; Foreign Service, £3,704; France and Switzerland, £2,082; United States, £13; Australia and New Zealand, £339; Cape of Good Hope, £72; Canada, £89; Sweden, £118; and for the Building Fund, £30,182; making, with the shillings and pence omitted, the total of £74,665. On the expenditure side the balance overpaid to various departments accounts for £5,891, and the following payments were made for carrying on the movement:—General Spiritual Fund, £19,316; India, £655; Training Homes, £10,947; Rescue Home, £132; sick and wounded, £1,161; Foreign Service, £2,831; France and Switzerland, £2,316; United States, £157; Australia and New Zealand, £348; California, £55; Cape of Good Hope, £87; Canada, £141; Sweden, £25; and Building Fund, £30,146, leaving a balance in hand of £448. The profit and loss account of the trade department shows that the business is conducted with very considerable profit. The receipts amounted to £59,959, the stock left on hand being of the estimated value of £11,385. The expenses under the heads of wages, plant, rent, salaries, &c., came to £11,594; and the result of the year's transactions was to leave a net profit of £6,790. Mr. W. Bramwell Booth, the "Chief of Staff," states in the Report that £30,000 will be required in order to maintain the work throughout the world during the present year.

Amongst the subjects in the volume before us we have articles on The Duty of Parents ; The possibility of giving a Successful Training ; Conditions of Successful Training ; Godly Parentage ; The Responsibility of Parents ; Dedication ; Parental Example ; Family Government ; Teaching ; What is to be Taught ; Training ; Obedience ; Reading ; Smoking ; Strong Drinks, &c. Although the Author says with modesty that he has no time for the cultivation of the courtesies of life or the elegancies of literature, his great aim being in all things to do the largest amount of good by the readiest means, no candid reader could find fault with this little volume on purely literary grounds. So far as its teaching and style are concerned, it will bear comparison with the best works we know on child-training. What better idea of religion can we have than stated here :—(1) “ *That true religion does not consist in any set of opinions.* (2) *True religion does not consist in any forms or ceremonies.* (3) *True religion does not consist in any nice or good feeling merely. But true religion consists in love for God and those around.*” When we think of the tens of thousands of adherents which the “ Salvation Army ” has already secured, that this is the kind of religious teaching with which they are indoctrinated, and that all who are enrolled in the Army must renounce the habits of drinking and smoking, what true philanthropist does not rejoice in the movement and wish it God speed ?

REVELATION ; ITS NATURE AND RECORD. By HEINRICH EWALD. Translated by Rev. THOMAS GOADLY, B.A.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THEOLOGY. By DR. RABIGER. Translated by Rev. JOHN MACPHERSON, M.A. Vol. I.

PALESTINE. By Rev. ARCHIBALD HENDERSON. Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark, 38, George Street.

REVELATION. The very able translator of this valuable and celebrated work gives such a representation of it as will put our readers into possession of its contents and merits. He says, “ This first volume of Ewald’s great and important work, *Die Lehre der Bibel von Gott*, is offered to the English public as an attempt to read Revelation, Religion, and Scripture in the light of universal history and the common experience of man, and with constant reference to all the great religious systems of the world. The task is as bold and arduous as it is timely and necessary, and Ewald was well fitted to accomplish it. Oriental literature, the Biblical languages, the history of Israel and its relation to contemporary history, the

exegesis of the prophetic, evangelical, and apostolic records of Scripture were the study and occupation of his long and laborious life. His mind of singular penetration and grasp, and of wonderful breadth and spiritual insight, never lost its vigour even in his old age. If, in his spirit and temper, Ewald had more of the Jew or the prophet, than of the calmness of the philosopher, and in his style less of lucid brevity than of diffuse though magnificent eloquence, his fault is more than condoned by the lofty moral earnestness of his thoughts, and the poetic glow of his massive periods." In the publication of this valuable volume the enterprising publishers add greatly to the many obligations under which they have laid Biblical students. This work will undoubtedly be hailed by all who yearn for a deeper insight into the various revelations of the Great Father of light.

ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF THEOLOGY. Theological science has been called the queen of the sciences. If by theological science is meant the knowledge of God, it is verily so. But is there any possibility of knowing God intellectually? "Who by searching can find Him out?" What has hitherto been called theology has been only a class of human opinions more or less crude and conflicting concerning Him. Albeit all earnest human thoughts directed to God are, for many reasons, of a higher value than any other class of human cogitations. They challenge the highest intellectual effort, and inspire the great with reverence and humility. Many of our readers will probably be acquainted with some of the previous works of this author, such as his *Treatise on the Old Testament Apocrypha*, his *Christology of Paul*, his critical discussions on Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, &c. The impressions of these works will stimulate them to procure and study this work which is the most valuable of them all. The Translator seems to have done his work with scholarly ability and faithfulness to the original.

PALESTINE. This is another volume in the series of *Bible Hand-books* issued by Messrs. Clark. It is a little volume of intrinsic worth. The author avails himself of the varied light which the best authorities and travellers have thrown upon this small but ever-memorable portion of our globe.

SILVER CHIMES ; a Tale. London : Nisbet, Paternoster Row.

A most interesting tale for girls. It is well told, with an admirable purpose, and will be eagerly read from the first page to the last.

THE FIRESIDE ANNUAL, for 1884. By Rev. CHARLES BULLOCK, B.D.

HAND AND HEART. By Rev. FREDERICK SHERLOCK.

HOME WORDS FOR HEART AND HEARTH, 1884. By Rev. CHARLES BULLOCK, B.D.

THE DAY OF DAYS, Vol. XIII. By Rev. CHARLES BULLOCK, B.D.

THE TWO HOMES. By EMMA MARSHALL. London: *Home Words* Office, 7, Paternoster Square.

These works all proceed from the same well-known house, and so we class them together.

FIRESIDE is quite an old acquaintance; but, though old, the present volume bears no mark of age—not a grey hair or a wrinkled brow—it is full of vitality, a vitality that pushes out new branches clustering with fruit. Besides a large variety of anecdotes, poetry, illustrations, and Sunday readings, supplied by popular preachers, it has some excellent stories, displaying creative genius equal to most to be found in three-volume novels. The spirit of the whole is religious, reverent, and Catholic.

HAND AND HEART. This Annual is devoted to one of the most useful and important philanthropic works of the age, viz., to the promotion of temperance. Most ably does it work at its high mission. It has numerous contributors, amongst others Dr. B. W. Richardson, whose contributions to any subject which he treats have a value all their own. There are also numerous illustrations, and some portraits striking and life-like, such as Sir James Young Simpson, and Erasmus Wilson, &c.

HOME WORDS is a very well-known Magazine, and much valued. This volume contains a large number of clerical portraits; they are not all very beautiful, although there are some, such as Dr. Barry and Canon Wilkinson, that show intellect, and beam with the Gospel.

THE DAY OF DAYS. This Annual is for Sunday reading, designed and fitted to interest and instruct, as well as to inspire the young with goodness. It contains a variety of sketches, tales, and illustrations.

THE TWO HOMES. This story is from the well-known and able pen of Emma Marshall. It is fascinating and morally forceful. Few who commence its pages will fail to go on to the end, and at each step they will find some fresh breeze of inspiring sentiments.

DARKNESS AND DAWN, *The Peaceful Birth of a New Age.* London : Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1, Paternoster Square. 1884.

A wild book. So many will say. So many have said about many of the best books. And some pages of this will warrant the exclamation. But others are fraught with teaching that, as Christian Sociologists, we may well call "the present truth." The first half of the book is a dream—a sort of nightmare—founded alas! on fact, and the second half is also a sort of dream, founded also on fact. The first fact is the terrible and shameful social condition of the "toiling and moiling" masses of Englishmen through all the centuries, and even to-day. And the other fact is the "Christian Communism" of the Pentecostal era. Both dreams are well worth narrating, and both demand the careful consideration of those who are lovers of their kind. The writer is a man of manifold power. Wide and deep observation, and a genuine "enthusiasm of humanity" are discernible on every page. There is, moreover, a fine mingling of pathos and satire, of pity tender as Jeremiah's, and hope glowing as Isaiah's. The legend which explains the transformation from social woe to social blessedness is the golden key by which alone the problems that press us to-day can be solved.

*"Jesus Hominum Salvator,
Civitatis Dei Creator."*

THE PRESENT CHURCH REVIVAL, A Sermon preached in St. Mary's Church, Oxford, by Rev. JAMES M. WILSON, M.A., Head Master of Clifton College. Reprinted from *The Guardian*.

Through his valued contributions to our pages, no reader of *The Homilist* needs that Mr. Wilson be introduced to them. They know him as one of that wide-minded race of modern clergymen of which the Head Masters of our great schools are the most conspicuous members, until indeed they are no longer known as Head Masters, but as Canons of Westminster, Deans of Gloucester, Bishops of London, Archbishops of Canterbury. This sermon is mainly for Churchmen and for young Churchmen. For the preacher says, "I am speaking to Churchmen in the strongest centre of Church feeling." But the message is one that Nonconformists may rejoice to hear as having been so bravely and wisely uttered to Churchmen, and that we all, Churchman and Nonconformist alike, may well ponder for our own profit. We should like to quote many

paragraphs, but must be content with one. "The new current that has been setting in for some years and is now, I think, clearly definable, is the resolution to deal—as the Church of England, as a great national organization—with great social reforms, and the conviction that the truest service of Christ, who went about doing good, is fidelity in the effort to seek first the kingdom of God here on earth. It may be too late to save the nation: it may be Quixotic, but the Church will try. To give precision to my meaning I add that among these great social reforms there stand most conspicuous the movements for temperance, purity, education, for better housing of the poor, better recreation, better land laws, and better labour laws; these and all else that concerns the total social condition of the millions that make the nation."

DAILY THOUGHTS Selected from the Writings of CHARLES KINGSLEY, by his Wife. London: Macmillan and Co.

Mrs. Kingsley quotes from her husband's "Village Sermons," as a preface to this volume, the following paragraph:—"Books are precious heirlooms from one generation to another, training us, encouraging us, teaching us by the words and thoughts of men, whose bodies are crumbled into dust long ago, but whose words—the power of uttering themselves, which they got from Christ, the Word of God—still live and bear fruit in our hearts and in the hearts of our children after us, till the last day." How many of Canon Kingsley's books—of fiction, of essays, of poems, of sermons—are witnesses to the truth of that sentence of his. To many of the truest-hearted men and women we know they are "precious heirlooms." But we are bold to say that "Daily Thoughts" will become the cherished possession of even more than any of his works. It is a sort of "Birthday Book," with an extract from his writings for each day (the days of the Christian Year being specially noted) and a blank space opposite for the autographs of friends whom we may connect with each day as being their birthday. Those who know how Mrs. Kingsley has given us her illustrious husband's "Life," will expect the very best quotations from his works or from his letters here. And they will not only not be disappointed, but will be fired anew with enthusiasm for the man and for his words, and what was ever far more, his ambition for the true, the beautiful, the good "at whose shrine he ever nobly ministered." We shall be sure of the thanks of all our readers to whom this notice introduces a priceless daily companion.

MEMORIES OF JAMES HOGG, THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD. Edited by his daughter, Mrs. GARDEN; with Preface by Professor VEITCH. London and Paisley: Alexander Gardner.

This work is a tribute from a daughter to the memory of her father. The hero, though a Scotch peasant and reared in comparative poverty, was endowed with genius of an order approaching that of Burns. From obscurity he rose to fame; became the friend of Sir Walter Scott, Wordsworth, Christopher North, Allan Cunningham, Southey, and men of such high mould. We have read this book with enjoyment. It is the life of a man, full of nature, glowing with genius, at the same time mixed with not a little self-conceit. Although vanity is, perhaps, one of the most contemptible elements in human character, one can almost tolerate it in such a man as this. When a grand peacock bespreads his enchanting plumage in the sun one is pleased rather than otherwise. A letter to James Hogg, from his friend, Robert Southey, referring to the little critics, one of the most contemptible classes of men, may be interesting. He says: "There was a time when I was materially injured by unjust criticism, but even then I despised it from a confidence in myself, and a natural buoyancy of spirit. It cannot injure me now, but I cannot hold it in more thorough contempt."

SUNSHINE; Volume for 1884. Edited by Dr. WHITTEMORE. London: Stoneman and Co., 67, Paternoster Row.

This volume of "Sunshine" is a charming book for the young. It contains a vast variety of matter to delight children. There are interesting tales, instructive anecdotes, biographical sketches, historical facts, pictorial puzzles, &c. The illustrations are numerous, and the book, as a whole, is one that will be a most acceptable gift to either girls or boys.





The
Leading Homily.

THE BAPTISM OF BLOOD.

"I HAVE A BAPTISM TO BE BAPTIZED WITH; AND HOW AM I
STRAITENED TILL IT BE ACCOMPLISHED."—*Luke* xii. 50.

OUR Lord here used a phrase familiar enough to his hearers, but which by frequent iteration has lost much of its primitive meaning to us. We should never forget in using any New Testament phrase that terms usually connote far more than they denote. Not to enter into logical niceties, all must have observed that words warp their meaning as they drift down the stream of time. They pass current from hand to hand, and not only like coin are they worn by currency, but their value is debased. They no longer represent the actual sum which they once stood for, but have sunk to a new standard of value, like the "Pound Scot" worth little more than a penny, or the Spanish Maravedi, a coin too valueless to be even flung to a beggar.

Such is the debasement of meaning which the term "baptism" has undergone. Around it has clustered a whole world of modern or mediæval associations, the polemical phrases of theologians who do battle with each other by hurling Bible phrases, torn out of their connection, as the Titans hurled rocks in the wars of the giants. In this way the term baptism has

been the battle-field of rival theologies. Sacramental and Evangelical divines, Pædo-Baptists and Anti-pædo Baptists have met here to fight out their differences on a text. Belgium has been described as the cockpit of Europe, because Spain, France, and Germany here met to fight out their last fight for supremacy. It has been much the same with the term "baptism." Blood has been shed and fires kindled in the dispute as to whether infants should be brought to or forbidden the font. In the same way ink has been poured out like water as to the exact lexical meaning of a Greek root, which in all probability Christ and His first disciples never once heard or understood the meaning of.

These are among the "after thoughts of theology," which must be all swept aside as impertinences if we are to approach our text with any intelligence or spiritual insight. As a Jew speaking to Jews, our Lord's meaning is simple enough, and as they understood it, so should we do, following in the current of the ideas of the age which He lived in, of the law which He came not to destroy but to fulfil. To a Jew a lustration by water was a sign. It was one of nature's symbols, and, like fasting, it was not so much ordained by the law of Moses as accepted by it, and incorporated into it as matter of course. No one ever entered on a fresh career, or undertook any higher work for God, without a preparatory stage of fasting and a preliminary baptism. We have lost the meaning of this in modern times, hence when the old words come down to us, having lost their true significance, we try to fasten new meanings on them. The sovereign dubs a knight in our day simply by laying the flat of a sword on his shoulder; but "dubbing" properly means "dipping," and refers to the bath on the morning after a night of vigil and fasting spent by the knight-bachelor at the shrine of the saint before whom his arms were hung up as votive offerings. The order of the "Bath" exists to this day in this country, the name alone, which to us moderns is so unmeaning, being a strange survival of old-world ideas and of practices brought by the Crusaders from the East.

Throwing ourselves back at once into these old-world modes of thought, which were Oriental, but not exclusively Jewish, we

begin to discern the Saviour's meaning. He tells His disciples that He had a new stage of His ministry to be entered on, for which He could be dedicated or consecrated only in one way—by a baptism which, in His case, was to be a baptism of blood. The New Testament or covenant (the word Testament is wretchedly misleading and wholly foreign to the Oriental mind) was to be in His blood. It could be sealed in no other way. A covenant only had force over the slain victim, and without this shedding of blood no binding pact could be sealed between God and man.

This then is the meaning of Christ's second, or as we should more correctly call it His third baptism. Divines have pointed out no less than three baptisms: that of water, which was John's, unto repentance and outward reformation of life; that of fire, which is of the Holy Ghost and with power for service in life; and, lastly, that of blood, which is—when the burnt-offering of ourselves, our souls and bodies, is laid on the last altar—a death sacrifice. It is to the last of these which Christ here refers. "Bind the sacrifice with cords, yea even unto the horns of the altar." In this sense He speaks of Himself as not only willing to die, but actually impatient until the sacrifice is complete. "How am I straitened," He exclaims, "until it be accomplished." He was held in, as it were, like a greyhound in the leash, or the falcon in its hood, and pines till loosed to speed, like a bolt to its butt, straight to the altar of sacrifice on Calvary. To this all His previous ministry led. Without this all His miracles, His training, His teaching would be unmeaning. "Lo I come,"—there is a world of meaning in that short interjection, "lo." It carries with it the thought of His entire willingness, of His longing, yea, panting for this as the crown and consummation of His ministry. He did not come to partly do God's will and then to choose His own path, to run well and then meet a hindrance and step aside to the bye-ends of self-indulgence. He was no Achilles in his tent, alternately heroic and ignoble, a passion-swayed nature with fires from heaven and fumes of self going up from the same altar.

To understand the person of Christ we must enter into the

meaning of His agony and bloody sweat, His cross and passion. There is no "*Ecce Homo*" view of Him to be learned from His early ministry, from the sermon on the mount, or from considering the lilies of the fields of Galilee, unless we follow Him to Gethsemane and Golgotha. We cannot cut the life of the Man of Sorrows in half, and take as much as we have taste for, rejecting the rest. How this eclectic study of His life ends we have proof in Renan's case, whose halting, half-hearted reverence has ended in conclusions as to His conduct the reverse of reverent, and which give up His character for common honesty. For this reason let me lead you on to-day to the only conclusions as to the life and work of Christ which the facts of the case call for.

He has a baptism to be baptized with, and is straitened and pressed in spirit till it is accomplished. All men who feel what is called a mission in life are unhappy until launched on their career. This is the meaning of a mission, that it is an internal call, a voice of God within, a fire in their bones which will not let them rest till it is accomplished. Such was Jeremiah's mission, such that of the apostle Paul. A necessity was laid upon him; yea, woe was it to him unless he preached the Gospel. In Christ's case this internal call was infinitely clearer, more commanding, more all-compulsive. It was His meat and drink to do His Father's will and finish His work. What to us seems the language of dreamy metaphor was, in His case, sober truth and plain reality. We live to eat or eat to live according as we are a little higher or lower in the sensual scale, but the difference between the stoic and the epicure is not much in this respect. But in Christ's case the Father's glory was His one master-passion, His one consuming desire. The author of "*Ecce Homo*" has thought to touch Him off by the one trait of an enthusiasm for humanity. This is true as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. It does not exhaust our conception of His character. What lies behind, unseen but to the spiritual eye, is the enthusiasm for divinity. He was the Father's Holy Child. He did always that which pleased His Father, and that which pleased Him most was that He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.

But we may ask, and this is the question which the old theology answers in one way, and the new in another, how is it that sacrifice and suffering, as such, can be pleasing and acceptable to God? That the ministry of a spotless life, with its activity for the good of others; that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, which begins and ends with visiting the fatherless and widows, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, this kind of life-service we can understand. But when we come to this death, even the death of the cross, we are baffled, and we have to fall back on several sacrificial theories, all more or less approximations to a great mystery. We are told that the sacrifice was necessary as a ransom-price to be paid for sin; whether it was due to Satan, as the great slave-owner of souls; or to the law, as a satisfaction for its offended majesty; or to the universe at large, as a kind of warning that sin must not be trifled with or committed with impunity. These are theories of the atonement which we need not here discuss, and which, under the authority of two or three great names, make up the stock teaching of the old theology. But in our day many thinkers, not of one school of thought but of several, agree in calling for some deeper and more intimate explanation of the sacrifice of Christ which shall land us not in mere conceptions of God's character as moral governor of the universe, but as the Father of our spirits. "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," is the hunger-stricken cry of humanity in our day. We need this to show that sacrifice is of the very heart of God Himself. The Lamb is seen standing in the midst of the throne; not merely before the throne, propitiating majesty, but in the midst of the throne, manifesting God's real and inmost essence. This is the teaching which is sometimes called new theology, but which is in truth the old theology of apostles and prophets when the traditions of men and the incrustations of dogma have been removed. Christ is seen as not only willing to die, but feeling shut in and constrained until He die. He had manifested the Father by word and deed, by parable and miracle, but the last and most excellent manifestation was by an act of sacrifice, so sublime and unique, that unless we can explain it as proceeding

out of the throne of God it would seem to be unmeaning even in the case of Him who is the Lamb. That He was slain to appease the Father's wrath, or that blood must flow to wash out the taint of sin, this is now felt to be far-fetched, if not repellant to what we know of the character of God. But as the sacrifice which is to act magnetically on us, to draw us out of the death of self into the new life of God, which is to kill the "flesh" in us that the spirit may be quickened, this it is which truly explains His death.

We may call this old or new theology, but such phrases are cold at best, and may be left to those who like word-chipping logic. To the simple and the contrite, the tender and the true, the death of Christ will be felt to be the wisdom of God and the power of God. The test of the truth of any religion is when it energises morals and constrains the conscience, not merely to approve but also to act out the good. Now Christ's Gospel effects this, and effects it through the death of Christ, who died leaving us an example to follow His steps. Thus we are one with Christ and Christ with us when we die unto sin and live again unto righteousness. Lastly, let me say, that this is the true meaning of our baptism. To be planted with Him in the likeness of His death, and so raised in the likeness of His resurrection, this is our true life, and he who is so joined unto Christ will feel he is one with Him in His death in order to be one with Him in His glorious resurrection.

ST. JOHN'S, CATERHAM.

J. B. HEARD, M.A.

THE NEED OF UTTERANCE.—"What is anything worth until it is uttered? Utterance there must be in word or deed to make life of any worth. Every true pentecost is a gift of utterance. Life is too short and opportunities too meagre for many deeds; besides the best friendships are precisely those where there is no possibility of material helpfulness, and I would take no deeds as an adequate compensation for the frigid glassy eye, and hard indifferent tones of one's solid and sensible and conscientious friend."—GEORGE ELIOT.

Germ of Thought.

Sacrifice, the Way of Life.

(A Sermon for Good Friday.)

“LIKEWISE ALSO THE CHIEF PRIESTS MOCKING HIM, WITH THE SCRIBES AND ELDERS, SAID, HE SAVED OTHERS, HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE.”—*Matthew* xxvii. 41, 42.

THE scene of which these words form part of the narrative is the most mournful and tragical in all human history. Sacrifice has often been demanded, and men who would be faithful in righteousness have had to prove their fidelity by their death; but there has never been, as indeed there never can be, a sacrifice like Christ's. That must ever remain alone—alone in its revelation of God's great love, and alone in its revelation of the appalling possibilities of sin.

Its tragedy is made all the more terrible by the recollection that it was not the common people, inspired by a mad fanaticism, who insulted Christ in the last moments of His agony, but the men who represented the highest culture of their time, and the men who were the priests of the Church of God. It was they who cried, “He saved others, Himself He cannot save”; they who knelt before Him in mock reverence, and professed themselves willing to believe in Him, if only He would perform another miracle and come down from the cross. The torture of the nails driven through His hands and feet must have been less cruel and pitiless than the anguish of heart caused by that exquisite and refined brutality.

He came to save others, not Himself; He was lifted up that He might draw all men unto Him. The object of His life, the aim of all His work, was the redemption and the spiritual recovery of men; and the sufferings He endured, the weary walk at the end through the mad and yelling crowd, so mad that it

had no feeling or thought of pity; the cross with all its circumstance of agony and shame; all that was but the means by which He accomplished it. Had He saved Himself and come down from the cross, He would have made known His weakness, not His strength, and have sacrificed "the end for which He was born, and the cause for which He was sent into the world." He was "wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities," because He had no other way of doing what lay in His heart to do, no other way of reconciling men to God, and of saving them from moral and spiritual death. He came to save others; He would not save Himself.

And here we come upon an aspect of the cross that we are often tempted to overlook—an aspect of it that may not be of the most vital importance so far as our justification and reconciliation are concerned, yet one that is of immeasurable importance in its relation to our spiritual history. Christ walked along the way of sacrifice that He might fulfil the end for which He came into the world; along that same path we also must walk if we would fulfil our own. Without the cross His work would have gone unfinished, and His life would have been deprived of its glory and its crown. We too shall fail to realize any great purpose, and gain the glory possible to every human heart, unless we are prepared, like Him, to carry the burden of the cross, and to enter by the way of sacrifice into the joy of the kingdom of God.

Our subject falls into two simple divisions—I.—The voluntariness of Christ's sacrifice. II.—Its relation to our spiritual experience.

I.—THE VOLUNTARINESS OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE. It is perfectly true, as we have often been reminded, that death by violence was the natural and inevitable conclusion of His life. He was not orthodox. He crushed too relentlessly the cherished conceits of the priesthood, and had too slight a regard for the vested interests of the Pharisee and the scribe. As a consequence the years of His ministry were years of suffering. The priest and Levite, scribe and Pharisee, bound themselves together to hunt Him down, and how well they fulfilled their mission this

narrative declares. Popular feeling was invoked; traditions which went back to Moses and the prophets were cited against Him; His regard for the sinner was held as a proof of His own impurity; His claim to be the Son of God was denounced as an execrable blasphemy. On every hand He was met by the hatred and intrigue of these "leaders of the people," so that in a physical as well as in a higher sense He moved at a very early period into the dread shadow of the cross. A life that arrayed against itself all the great social and ecclesiastical forces in bitter and uncompromising hostility, whose purity was so pitiless a protest against the hollow righteousness of the time, could only have one termination, and that the cross. We cannot imagine Jesus Christ, after the life He lived, dying as other men die. The cross was but the natural and inevitable culmination of His work.

And to the "leaders of the people" who accomplished His death, what did it mean? The annihilation of His work and the utter extinction of His claims. They did not believe in Him, and when they saw Him helpless in mortal pain they were confirmed in their unbelief. If He could save others surely He could save Himself; if He could not save Himself, the proof was clear and emphatic that He could not save another. So they argued, as if they would make their mockery justify their deed. They had not learned the lesson which the fierce pages of Jewish history ought to have burned into every Jewish soul, that a saviour of others never seeks to save himself, and that he who saves himself loses all claim to be the saviour of others. "He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him, for He said, I am the Son of God." They regarded the cross as the judgment upon His blasphemy, and His death as the destruction of His cause.

And to His disciples, what was it? An unspeakable disappointment, the death of all their hopes. They knew not then, what they learned afterwards, that the death on the cross was included in His purposes and plans. All they knew was that they were alone, and that He who had saved others could not save Himself.

It seemed to them as if His power had suddenly collapsed. They had seen Him apparently helpless against the rabble that had clamoured for His blood; held up to the scorn and brutal jests of a frantic crowd; stripped and bruised; stricken on the cross as if by a great despair; bereft of everything that had made Him in their eyes the mighty Son of God. It is no wonder that their faith failed them, and that their desolated hearts felt, like a stab, the fierce pain of the taunt, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." For it is always easy to believe that he who has been degraded and put to shame by men has been smitten and accursed by God.

But the meaning of the cross was not hidden from Jesus Christ, and when the crowning miracle of the resurrection was complete, it began to dawn also on the minds of His disciples. The cross was involved in the purpose for which He came into the world, and He bore the burden of it upon His heart long before he had to carry its symbol upon His shoulders. Until His "hour" was come His enemies were powerless against Him; and when it came it was His hour, not their's,—the hour of His glorification and victory. It was then, and then only, that He cried, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

That knowledge puts another meaning into the taunt, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." His enemies meant to put Him out of the world, but the method they adopted to put Him out of it was the method He had adopted to bring Himself more powerfully into it. Had they been gifted with the prophetic talent that once was native to their race, they would have let Him alone. They would have denied themselves the ghastly satisfaction they found in His sufferings, and have left unperformed the mean insults which, with the coward's instinct, they knew so well how to inflict. But they were blind. They only saw that He who had thwarted their schemes, exposed their deceptions, and put them to open shame, was helpless in their hands. So they put on Him a crown and a scarlet robe, and cried, "Hail, King of the Jews," and told Pilate that they would take His blood upon themselves; and it was hidden from them that the crown and the scarlet robe were emblems of a

royalty to which one day the whole world would gladly acknowledge allegiance, that in a different sense from their's men would bow their heads as they looked up and saw the cross, and that with a sincerity, how pathetic and how deep, they would exclaim, "His blood be on us and on our children!"

Though the meaning of the cross was hidden from His enemies, it was not hidden from Him. It was the sacrifice of His love. Its shadow fell upon Him at the beginning; there was no step in the dreary pathway to it He had not foreseen, and no pain of it He had not, therefore, forefelt. The hand that the chief priests and scribes had in the crucifixion was, after all, a subordinate one; they found, what it is never difficult to find, the wood for the altar; He Himself provided the Lamb for the sacrifice. He did not save Himself, not because He could not, not because His genius had been baffled and outwitted, not because the arm of His omnipotence had been smitten with decay; but because the sin and shame and death of men, and the ruin and despair which sin had let loose upon the world, all loomed up before Him and appealed with imperious urgency to His love. Therefore it was that "He endured the cross, despising the shame," that He saved others, but would not save Himself. The only necessity of the cross was the necessity of His love.

II.—THE RELATION OF HIS SACRIFICE TO OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. It was by sacrifice that Christ wrought out His purpose concerning us; it is by sacrifice that we work out our's concerning Him. The Son of Man was glorified by the cross; the sons of men must be glorified in the same way. And Christ's own life was the perfect illustration of His doctrine that sacrifice is the way of life,—a doctrine to which "the chief priests, with the scribes and elders," gave unconscious and unintentional assent as they cried, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." "If thine hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee" (Matt. v. 30); "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall find it" (Luke ix. 23, 24); so run the doctrine and the law.

It is a doctrine which is perfectly natural, though it is looked upon by many as hard, exacting, and unnecessary. There are many easy-minded people who regard the idea of a cross which they must carry as too terrible to be seriously contemplated as the only condition of entrance into life. They desire an easier and a gentler method. Yet it was no new law which Christ disclosed. It is one which occupies a significant position in every religion, and which may be found working in every experience. Not only is it true that a man cannot be saved eternally except he lose himself, it is equally true that he cannot be saved temporally except he pass through the same ordeal. The kingdom of heaven is as accessible as the kingdoms of the earth, and accessible in just the same way. In one form or another the cross figures in all human history. It is laid upon us before we have taken many steps of our journey; it is only lifted off when we have entered upon our hidden destiny. It is the sign of entrance into the kingdoms of the world as well as the kingdom of heaven. When we realize that, the words of Christ that speak to us of the necessity of sacrifice no longer affright us with their severity; they describe a law that is seen to fit in with the framework of our character and history, and they appeal to us, tender with the mercy, not terrible with the wrath of God.

Let me illustrate it. The statesman, for example, who desires to make a name that posterity will venerate and respect; the merchant who desires to be foremost in the world of commerce; the soldier who would rank amongst the great heroes of his country; the philanthropist who would make "a name that men will not willingly let die"; all act in accordance with a law that is precisely the same as the Gospel-law of life by sacrifice. Their energies are devoted to the objects which have absorbed their love. It may be that they are prompted by ambition, or that they strive after wealth or fame, seeking no higher success, yet they work under the law of sacrifice, and sometimes, with sad and terrific emphasis, carry out the injunction "if thine hand offend thee cut it off." They give themselves to their work, lose themselves in it, and surrender themselves without reserve to the purpose which they have made the passion of their life.

They illustrate on a lower level the truth that only as a man loses his life does he save it, and teach us that the kingdoms of this world, like the kingdom of heaven, can only be entered and won by self-denial, sacrifice, and the carrying of the cross. Sacrifice here is the way of life.

But not only is it a law that operates in the lives of men who strive to realize a purpose that is distinctly set before them, it operates none the less surely in the lives of those who know of no higher attractions than gaiety and pleasure, or who are content to drift lazily and uselessly through the world. They do not escape the burdens which press on nobler souls. But there is a difference. The cross which they carry is not one from which they shake themselves free, and which fits them for a richer history, but one which increases in weight and intolerableness the longer it is carried. For the sacrifice they are compelled to make is that of character and manhood; and surely no sacrifice can be more sad and pitiful than that which ruins a man in his sublimest possibilities and noblest powers, and through which he comes to be cast aside at last as an incumbrance, a withered, paralysed, unworthy thing,—an offence alike to God and men. Ah! better, a thousand times better, make the sacrifice of a noble heart, and have the hands and feet bruised in the upward struggle, than be driven into the awful sacrifice of an indifferent, faithless, and worthless soul!

Inside the circle then of our ordinary experiences there is no escape from sacrifice. It is a law which rules in every life. The man who would take possession of the kingdoms of wealth, fame, and power, must sacrifice comfort, pleasure, luxury, ease, and the man who lives only for what he regards as pleasure, must sacrifice the higher elements of his being. There is nothing therefore unnatural in the cross being made the condition of entrance into the kingdom of heaven. God leaves us no choice here, but He does leave with us the power to decide whether the cross we carry shall be one of hopeless pain, or one which shall grow lighter and lighter as its discipline is perfected, and which we shall cast aside as, glorified and crowned, we enter the kingdom of the Lord.

And if it be said that though such a law may be very natural it is nevertheless a burden to souls like ours, we can only answer that the purpose it is meant to accomplish is the sublimest men can know, and that it presses heavily only when selfish living has chilled the enthusiasm and made stale the inspirations of our souls.

What that purpose is we all well know. It is the ennobling and purifying of our characters, that evil may be known no more, and that with eyes, through which looks no sinful spirit, we may gaze lovingly and without shrinking on the face of God. Its sacrifice, therefore, is necessarily great. It strikes among the roots of life and calls for the surrender of many things that are cherished by our blind and selfish love. Yes, the sacrifice is great, but then there is no purpose within the compass of our experience that is so uplifting, none that strengthens us with mightier powers, and none that confers upon us a more lasting glory. Christ does ask for much, but the *much* He asks for disappears before the *more* He bestows.

Yet great as the sacrifice is, it is not greater than Christ enables us to meet. It is not easy to humiliate pride, to renounce the doubtful habits which have become a second nature, to pass through the fires of temptation without being burned or scorched thereby. It is not easy to crucify the desires and will; to die, as the apostle puts it, all day long; to move steadily and constantly forward without looking back to the Sodom which has created all our sorrow and yet which we sorrow to forsake. It is not easy to sacrifice ourselves even for a purpose that is heroic and sublime, uncheered by the crowd whose applause makes even heroism easy. But remember that love conquers all difficulties and makes all burdens light. He who loves little gives little; he who loves much gives much; he who loves with all the passion of his soul confesses, even when he has given all, that his sacrifice is impoverished and incomplete. Love is the secret of all great endeavour and achievement, the spirit that bears down all obstacles and that inspires the heart to the carrying of the cross. Here Christ is the example for us all. It was His love that gave His sacrifice its meaning, that set His

face stedfast to Jerusalem, and enabled Him to say when He came up with the hour of His humiliation and His sorrow, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

You would know how you may fulfil the law of Christ? The answer is here,—in the love that makes the yoke easy and the burden light. With His love as your inspiration, even when you groan beneath the heaviest burdens, you will hardly desire to lay them on the shoulders of any Cyrenian who may be passing by, and you will know that though you have to descend into the darkness you will rise again, it may be on the third day, mighty with a power that no burden can oppress. So you will learn how divine is this law of life by sacrifice, and how true are the words of Christ, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall find it." May He who knows all that is meant by the anguish of the cross keep you faithful to the end! Then when you have gone into the land where all burdens are laid down,—strengthened by the cross, and by it purified, uplifted, saved,—and it is asked, "Whence came they who are arrayed in white robes?" the answer will be, "These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

GLOUCESTER.

HENRY SHAW.

A Meditation for Easter Day.

"COME, SEE THE PLACE WHERE THE LORD LAY."—*S. Matt.* xxviii. 6.

EASTER has well been called the "Queen of Festivals." No language can adequately describe the joyfulness and value of the event which the Christian Church brings now to remembrance. Newman says—"At Christmas we joy with the natural, unmixed joy of children; but at Easter our joy is highly wrought

and refined in its character." From the event of the first Easter day dates the very commencement of the Christian Church. The *existence* and *history* of the Church can alone be understood by the light of the resurrection of the Lord. The text is an Easter-invitation. It is full of meaning and interest if we consider—the *speaker*, "An angel of the Lord" (*cf.* St. Luke, "Two men stood by them in shining garments;" "two angels in white," St. John); the *occasion*, the visit of Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" to the sepulchre of The Christ; the *purpose*, to convince these women that their Lord had risen from the dead. Let us accept this same invitation and visit the "empty tomb," and we shall find—

I.—A FACT WORTHY OF PROFOUND STUDY. We call it a fact. Certainly it has been, and is still, doubted by many sceptics. The whole question of "miracles" hangs upon this; but we take it as a fact that is vouched for by most *competent* and *candid* witnesses. (*Cf.* Westcott's "Gospel of the Resurrection," and Milligan's "Resurrection of our Lord.") It is a *grave* we visit. That fact alone starts many solemn thoughts, but still more so does the fact that it is a grave of One risen from the dead—an *empty* grave. *Whose* grave was it? What a strange occupant it had held! In the roll of ages how many millions of the children of men have died and found a grave, but none like unto Him whose empty tomb we visit. He was *perfect, holy, and sinless*; the *first* of that kind that death ever touched; the first *sinless* Being ever buried. There is, therefore, something in this that *identifies* yet *separates* Christ from all men. (a) The fact that Christ died *identifies* Him closely with men. He slept "the last sleep." He shared the "common lot." He was actual man. (b) The fact that Christ rose *separates* Him from men. He was the first who rose by His own inherent power. Death could have no lasting dominion over Him.

II.—A DOCTRINE WORTHY OF DEVOUT ACCEPTANCE. This doctrine dominates in all the teachings of the early apostles. It is impossible to understand the drift of the apostolic speeches and writings without bearing this in mind. Mark (a) the

significance of this doctrine. It becomes the *pledge* that all men shall rise again; that "Death himself shall die." It becomes the *pattern* of the human resurrection. Mark (b) the *influence* of this doctrine. Upon the early disciples this influence is very readily seen. How great was the *mental* transformation of Christ's followers. What enlarged and ennobled conceptions had they of Christ's character after His death. How great was the *moral* transformation. What bravery, self-sacrifice, &c. (Cf. p. 126 Westcott's "Gospel of the Resurrection.") What influence still does this doctrine exert upon all the faithful. It becomes a principle of (a) *spiritual life*; (b) *aim*; (c) *energy*. "If ye be risen with Christ," &c.

III.—A MYSTERY PROMPTING TO THANKFUL ADORATION. The whole story of Christ's life is "ringed round with mystery." The beginning was heralded by signs of the supernatural, and the close is marked by the same harmonious signs. For whose sake was this wonderful "Life," "Death," and "Resurrection," voluntarily taken? For our sakes who to-day praise Him, "for His mercy endures for ever." We adore because we now realize that (a) *our spiritual redemption and salvation is certain and complete*; that (b) *our religious faith has an immutable foundation*; and that (c) *all the promises of the Master and Teacher are certain of fulfilment*.

IV.—A THEME FOR JOYFUL PROCLAMATION. "Come, see," &c. We, too, may join in uttering the same invitation. Accepting such invitation will be the best method for (a) *Solution of mental doubts*. Do doubts arise concerning the faith that "has turned the world upside down?" Here is an invincible proof of the truth of that faith. For (b) *Consolation in heart bereavement and sorrow*. Those we have loved and lost are not gone for ever; we shall see them again, and be with them in a higher and nobler state. What rich and full consolation for us

"When tears are spent
And we are left alone with ghosts of blessings gone."

(c) *For calmness in prospect of death*. We, too, shall be victors

over death and the grave. Our graves shall be "emptied." With enlarged and emphatic meaning we can use the words—"Yea, though I walk," &c.

"So buried with our Lord we'll close our eyes
To the decaying world 'till angels bid us rise."—*Keble*.

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Easter Joy.

(*A Sermon for Easter Day.*)

"THEN WERE THE DISCIPLES GLAD WHEN THEY SAW THE
LORD."—*John* xx. 20.

EVENTIDE. The day one of strange tidings and great excitement. The disciples now together—their hopes, their fears; their belief, their unbelief. The appearance of Christ—*how* He completely conquered their doubts, gave them peace, then joy.

I.—THEIR JOY.

Reasons for it—

1. *They were assured they had not really lost their best Friend.* Notice their broken-hearted sorrow on the day of crucifixion, and the awful gloom of the day that followed. Their thoughts of Him,—His looks, words, deeds; what He had been to each of them personally; what each and all had lost; how if He had not risen they would have gone through the world disappointed and crushed. Additional cause of sorrow,—their cowardly fear, disloyalty, desertion. How all was changed when He appeared back from the grave, from the dead, to be their Friend, unfailing and forgiving.

2. *His resurrection was the assurance that injustice and iniquity had not conquered.* The death of Christ a sore trial of their faith. John the Baptist had fallen; *then* sin seemed triumphant. They had centred their hopes in Christ; their belief firm that *He* would conquer the enemies of truth and righteousness. Their gladness when in the triumphal procession the people shouted "Hosanna." Their stunned amazement as

well as sorrow when they heard of the death-sentence. What a triumph of iniquity, and defeat of innocency, purity, gentleness, love. What hope of the triumph of goodness now that, as they thought, *He* had failed? But when He appeared all this thought of failure changed to the certainty of success. Therefore their joy.

3. *His resurrection was the assurance of the truth of His words.* Notice the various occasions of His foretelling His suffering death and resurrection, also the refusal of the disciples to believe, and the reasons. Their remembrance of His words all too vivid after His death. His words in part only too true; but they would not believe the other part; it seemed incredible that He should rise. But when He appeared they knew that all His words were true. And so they knew that all that He had promised would be fulfilled. Endless life, the Father's house, their everlasting peace and joy, certain news; and therefore they "were glad when they saw the Lord."

4. *And so His resurrection was the assurance that His work was not a failure.* Their opinions partly erroneous; their desires, to some extent, worldly. But their knowledge clear that He had come to do a great and blessed work in the world; that they were to share in it and in its triumph. The impossibility of success without Him. His death the burial of their hopes. But see the disheartened warriors at their King and Leader's return. The battle not lost now; the victory sure. The cry, "The Lord is risen indeed," giving new life to the despairing little army, and a thrill of rapture to each loyal heart. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

II.—OUR JOY.

1. *A risen Christ.* This a constant joy through our Christian year. "An Easter-day in every week," and on our working-days. (Phil. iv. 4, 1 Thess. v. 6.) Only as this is the joy of the whole life can Easter-day be one of real joy. Our commemoration of that, without which Christianity had been a failure, because of which it is a success. Notice Luther's assertion that "The doctrine of justification by faith is the doctrine of a standing or falling church." This also true of the resurrection of Christ. A powerless creed ending with "crucified, dead, buried;"—a creed of

inspiration, power, victory, "the third day He rose again." The empty tomb the joy of the Church.

2. *A present Christ.* Explain how we, too, see the Lord. How He comes now as Friend, Teacher, Deliverer—stronger than death, than all our foes, too strong for us, for our doubts and fears—the Great Conqueror of all. This not the hallucination of the weak, no fever disease of troubled brains. This not mere opinion, but fact. Notice the testimony of the earnest Church from age to age. And the proof, what men have been, and are, who have believed.

CONCLUSION. Exhortation to great joy in worship, in work, in life, in death.

CHELTENHAM.

J. MORELL BLACKIE, LL.B.

The Lesson of the Hour.

"BUT DAVID ENCOURAGED HIMSELF IN THE LORD HIS GOD."

1 *Samuel* xxx. 6.

WE have only to glance at this passage and we shall come to the conclusion that David was at this time in great straits. If it can ever be said of any man that he is in desperate circumstances, it surely could be said of David here.

Ziklag was a Philistine city which Achish, king of Gath, had given to David and his band to dwell in, when in despair of escaping from the fierce hatred of Saul he decided to go over to the Philistines. This step, we may observe in passing, was a very strange one, but it brings out his attitude in the words of our text into bolder relief. We can attribute his resolve only to the greatness of his fears and the collapse of his faith. The step brought him into a snare too; for when the Philistine army was once more gathered to attack Israel, David was summoned to join it, and fight against his own people. What he would have

done in such an emergency we cannot tell. He might regard it something in the spirit of Coriolanus, as an opportunity for avenging himself upon Saul; but we may be sure David was too loyal and too patriotic to take such a mean advantage. However, he was not put to the test. The generals of the Philistine host, knowing David's reputation, prevailed upon Achish to dismiss him. He was consequently bidden to depart early in the morning and return to Ziklag.

But what did he and his comrades find on the third day as they approached the city? The Amalekites had smitten it and burned it with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters were taken captive. David and the people with him were greatly distressed; they wept until they had no more power to weep; his people spake of stoning David. It was not that he himself was in danger; it was not that the temporary home of his faithful followers had been destroyed; it was because those as near and dear to them as their own lives had been carried away, they knew not whither, by an unscrupulous foe. There had been, indeed, no slaughter,—that appeared to be a merciful feature of the siege; but, alas, those who had been spared by the sword might be preserved for dishonour worse than death. "But"—a very wonderful "but"—"David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." David, like the reputed bird, rose by one bold spring above the raging storm that had gathered around him and reached the region of eternal sunshine and calm. This was faith.

Let us observe—

I.—The REALITY of David's faith. It proved its reality by its power to enhearten him. It inspired him with courage; it rallied the scattered, prostrated powers of his soul; it opened a pathway of hope for him; it braced him for the necessities of the occasion.

To all human appearance all was lost. It needed more than the readiness of resource of the hunted fugitive, or the indomitable will of the bold and trusted leader to meet the exigency and assuage the wild grief of his men. It was not in power of

unaided man to stand firm at such a crisis. What could sustain, what embolden him at such an hour? Surely not sentiment or conjecture, a hoping against hope, that could have upheld him. David was a man of faith, of real faith; and it is the nature of real faith to rise with the emergency, so that the darker the surroundings the calmer and brighter is the gaze it fixes on heaven. Such was the faith which David had manifested in his combat with Goliath; such had been the faith of Abraham; such was the faith of the three Hebrew youths, of Daniel, and of Paul; such the faith of the Divine Author and Perfecter of our faith. It is only real faith that is equal to the strain, for it has in it the nature of Him on whom it reposes.

II.—This leads us to remark upon The SUFFICIENCY of David's faith. You may have a strong impression, a settled conviction that in certain circumstances you shall be helped, delivered, but the impression may be all a delusion, "the baseless fabric of a vision," a hallucination of the mind. David's faith was real subjectively, because it was *sufficiently* well-grounded objectively. He "encouraged himself *in the Lord his God*." In laying so much stress as we Protestants do, according to the clear teaching of Scripture, upon the necessity and efficacy of faith, it is possible that we sometimes obscure the subject and despoil it of its practical efficacy, detaining and entangling the anxious with elaborate explanations, instead of fixing the attention upon the Divine Object of faith. Faith separated from an adequate object is powerless; inspired by such an object—there is but *One*—it is mighty, puts heart into the weak, puts enthusiasm into the hopeless; laying hold upon God it is omnipotent.

It was the pre-eminence of the Jewish people that they had been schooled in faith. David was a man of faith. He *knew* whom he believed. Nothing could separate him, could cut him off from his God. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God." Trouble not thyself, my brother, about thy *faith*; look out unto God; fix thy gaze upon Him and thou shalt be saved. All mercy, all wisdom, all strength, all unimagined helpfulness, all

strange, incalculable, immeasurable resources are with God, and is He not, in Christ, the Lord thy God, thy Father?

III.—Another feature of David's faith is its **ACTIVITY**, its energy. What do we mean? David bestirred himself to *appropriate* the strength which the Object of his faith, and his faith in that Object, were calculated to inspire. He "encouraged *himself* in the Lord his God." What a blessed art this of self-encouragement in God. There is an attitude of faith which is passive. The language of its triumph then is the meek, "Thy will be done." But faith is active, lively. This is its characteristic feature. It is not only a shield, but a staff. It is its prerogative to encase the soul in all the armour of God. It is the *victory* that overcometh the world.

IV.—Let us not forget the **PRACTICAL** character of David's faith (see from v. 7). It was no time to lie upon the earth; there was something to be done, and done at once. David's faith gave shape and force to his action. He calls for the ephod, enquires of the Lord, obtains a favourable response, pursues the Amalekites, rescues the captives, inflicts a crushing blow upon the captors. Application:—

1. "*Nil desperandum!*" However troubled in the circumstances of our individual life; however afflicted; however cast down with trials, losses, disappointments; however beset by sickness or bereaved by visitation of death; however conscious of loneliness, weakness, sin, there is a Resource left,—*one* unfailing, universal Resource, one Refuge, one Stay, one Solace always at hand. We may encourage ourselves and one another in the Lord our God. He is ours if we will but accept Him. In Jesus Christ He is our Lord and our God.

2. At the present time we feel as if our individual needs, however urgent, are scarcely worthy of thought under the sorrow and anxiety which as a nation we are called to experience. In the Soudan things are looking ominous. Gordon, the incomparable Christian hero, cut off by treachery, when help so bravely pushing its way towards Khartoum was near. Generals

Earle and Stewart no more. Our brave soldiers, every one worthy of immortal honour as a hero—*if war in the esteem of our Lord Christ ever can claim honour*—after accomplishing deeds of almost unparalleled prowess, still in danger of being surrounded and slain by the savage hordes of the Mahdi. At home, sore depression of trade, sad disappointment in the councils of the nation, threat of horrible deeds by anarchists, many turning away from God, despondent of good, or relying upon their own skill, or on the forces of inanimate nature for succour, or committing themselves to the worship and service of the new god, *Humanity*. In the face of these difficulties of the time, O for some prophet to arise to teach us authoritatively, if, indeed, we would bow to any authority, "What Israel ought to do." We are called, loudly called, to repentance, humiliation, prayer. But *nil desperandum!* Let us encourage ourselves amid reverses and fears, in spite of huge labours and formidable foes and accumulating difficulties, in the Lord our God. Let our noble Queen, and our great and good parliamentary Leader, and all our statesmen, and every one of us who believes that neither nature, nor chance, nor fate, nor man, nor devil rules the world, but that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, now address ourselves with hearty co-operation to the duty which may to our deliberate decision appear to be imperative.

3. And if we are thus to encourage ourselves, we should maintain a spirit of calm equanimity; we may not cherish a revengeful spirit; we must not give way to panic; we will not allow the petty jealousies of party to weaken and distract us; we will seek guidance of God, and being convinced of our duty to Him, and of His faithfulness to those who trust in Him, we will go forward whatever be the consequences.

ILFRACOMBE,

JOSEPH MORRIS.



GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn not in the light of any of these schools of expositions. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence.]

No. XXV.

The Domain of Anti-Christ.

“AND I STOOD UPON THE SAND OF THE SEA, AND SAW A BEAST RISE UP OUT OF THE SEA, HAVING SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS, AND UPON HIS HORNS TEN CROWNS, AND UPON HIS HEADS THE NAME OF BLASPHEMY. AND THE BEAST WHICH I SAW WAS LIKE UNTO A LEOPARD, AND HIS FEET WERE AS THE FEET OF A BEAR, AND HIS MOUTH AS THE MOUTH OF A LION: AND THE DRAGON GAVE HIM HIS POWER, AND HIS SEAT, AND GREAT AUTHORITY. AND I SAW ONE OF HIS HEADS AS IT WERE WOUNDED TO DEATH; AND HIS DEADLY WOUND WAS HEALED: AND ALL THE WORLD WONDERED AFTER THE BEAST,” &c.—*Rev.* xiii. 1-18.

FANCIFUL interpretations of this chapter, as well as other portions of this book, are abundant. The last (see “*The Early Days of Christianity*,” by Canon Farrar, page 452) seems to us not less unfounded and absurd than those that have gone before. Most of such interpretations seem to assume that the comparatively few people who lived in Rome centuries ago, were of such

immense importance as to absorb the mind of the Infinite, that “Papal Rome,” as it is called, was the one great moral foe of creation, unmatched and matchless. But our method of treating this book of Revelation, whether right or wrong, philosophic or foolish, ignores all fanciful interpretations, and seeks to turn even the dreams of old dreamers to such a

practical account as to serve the ethical interests of the men that are, and the men that are yet to be. Hence we use this chapter to throw light upon *the domain of Anti-Christ*. But what do we mean by Anti-Christ? Not an institution, ecclesiastical, political, or social, connected with any geographical spot or chronological period, but a moral state of mind pervading all places, and running through all times. Whatever state of mind is opposed to that moral state of mind which Christ incarnated, exemplified, and inculcated I call Anti-Christ. His state of mind was one of *truth*, reality, hence all falsehoods, shams, hypocrisies are Anti-Christ. His state of mind was one of *supreme worship*. He realised and revered the Eternal Father in all, hence all irreverence and idolatries are Anti-Christ. His state of mind was a state of *self-sacrificing philanthropy*. He loved men and gave Himself for their benefit. He did not please Himself. Hence all selfishness, worldliness, self-seeking is Anti-Christ. St. John says, "Even now there are many Anti-Christ." There

are Anti-Christ in Protestant Churches and Chapels, and in thousands of those who call themselves Christians. Some of the fiercest denouncers of Popery as Anti-Christ are those who have the most of Popery and Anti-Christ in their hearts. This chapter serves to illustrate some facts in connection with the domain of Anti-Christ on this earth.

I.—It has A MANIFOLD DEVELOPMENT. The huge and monstrous forms that seem to pass before the imagination of the lonely prisoner at Patmos, as here recorded, are full of forms, grotesque, huge, and hideous. Here is a huge beast rising out of the sea, the scene of tumult. His power is great, he has "*ten horns*," his intelligence is great, he has "*seven heads*," his influence is great, he has "*ten crowns*" (diadems). In form "*he was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion*." Then there is another beast "*coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon*." He, like the former, is endowed with tremendous power, in-

vested with extraordinary attributes, and is one in spirit and aim with the former, the beast that rises out of the realm of tumult, the sea. So that from the sea and from the land, the whole terraqueous globe, monstrous forms of evil appear in the domain of Anti-Christ.

What imagination can depict and what arithmetic could compute the hideous and monstrous forms in which Anti-Christ appears in the world to-day? In the commerce of the world, in the governments of the world, in the campaigns of the world, in the literature of the world, in the religions of the world, in fact, in the social, industrial, and professional life of the world, Anti-Christ appears in aspects as hideous and in a spirit as savage and blasphemous as the monsters depicted in this vision. Where in any part of the world do we not find Anti-Christ in some form or another? Whatever the form it assumes, it is hideous and monstrous. What can be more monstrous than to find a human being rising and acting in opposition to Him who is the all-loving and

all-blessed, the Christ of God and the Saviour of the world? Concerning this domain of Anti-Christ it is suggested that—

II.—IT HAS ONE MASTER-SPIRIT. The dragon is here represented as the presiding genius over all. *"The dragon gave him his power, and his seat (throne), and great authority."* The presiding genius in this chapter and in the preceding one is called the dragon. Reason and analogy concur with the Bible in teaching that there is on this earth a great master-spirit of evil, one that leads the world "captive at his will." He is, in spirit, character, and aim against Christ. He is, in a pre-eminent sense, Anti-Christ. There is nothing Christly about him, but otherwise. Satan is the enemy of Christ, the old serpent, the "prince of the power of the air," that worketh in the children of disobedience. The record of this vision serves to illustrate several things concerning this master spirit of evil.

First: He is *endowed with tremendous power*. It is said of this dragon that "*he doeth great wonders (signs), so that*

he maketh (should even make) fire to come down from (out of) heaven," that he works "by the means of miracles" (signs). The Jewish Scriptures speak of him as a being of tremendous energy, leading the world captive at his will, and even Christ who knew him seems to speak with deference concerning his extraordinary power.

Secondly: *His grand pursuit is moral mischief.* (1) He promotes blasphemy. "*He opened his mouth in (for) blasphemy (blasphemes) against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*" His grand aim seems to be to bring the Infinite Himself into contempt. (2) He promotes deception. "*And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth.*" He is a liar and the father of lies. The first stone of his empire in the world was a lie, and by lies he has built it up and supports it. A life of wickedness is a life of delusion. All his followers walk in "a vain show." (3) He promotes destruction. "*It was given unto him to make war with*

the saints, and to overcome them." Malignity is his inspiration. His battle is with the saints. He works to destroy goodness, and to destroy goodness is to destroy souls. He has no fight with fiends but with saints.

Thirdly: *His sphere is co-extensive with the world.* One of his prime ministers, or rather chief generals, came out of "the sea" and the other came up from "the earth." The whole terraqueous globe is the arena of this arch-enemy of souls. He is the god of this world. Wherever falsehood, dishonesty, impurity, revenge are, there he is. And where are they not?

Fourthly: *However great his influence, he is under a restraining law.* An old writer has said, "He is limited in point of time, his reign is to continue forty and two months. He is also limited as to the persons and people that he shall entirely subject to his will and power. It will be only those whose 'names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.'*" Though the devil and Anti-

* See Breviary in this number.

Christ might overcome their bodily strength and take away their natural life, they could never conquer their souls, nor prevail with them to forsake their Saviour and revolt to His enemies."

Fifthly: *His mission will ultimately prove self-ruinous.* "*He that leadeth into* (if any man is for) *captivity shall go into captivity.*" (into captivity he goeth). Here is the principle of retribution attested by all human experience and philosophy, and felt to be just.

"*He that killeth* (if any man shall kill) *with the sword must be killed.*" This applies to Satan, he brings men into captivity, and into captivity shall he one day go. Sin is suicide, wrong is self-destructive. In every act the devil performs he is forming a link in that adamant chain that shall bind him not merely for a thousand years but for ever.

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No. XXVI.

The Heaven of Humanity.

"AND I LOOKED, AND, LO A LAMB STOOD ON THE MOUNT SION, AND WITH HIM AN HUNDRED FORTY AND FOUR THOUSAND, HAVING HIS FATHER'S NAME WRITTEN IN THEIR FOREHEADS. AND I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN, AS THE VOICE OF MANY WATERS, AND AS THE VOICE OF A GREAT THUNDER: AND I HEARD THE VOICE OF HARPERS HARPING WITH THEIR HARPS: AND THEY SANG AS IT WERE A NEW SONG BEFORE THE THRONE, AND BEFORE THE FOUR BEASTS, AND THE ELDERS: AND NO MAN COULD LEARN THAT SONG BUT THE HUNDRED AND FORTY AND FOUR THOUSAND, WHICH WERE REDEEMED FROM THE EARTH. THESE ARE THEY WHICH WERE NOT DEFILED WITH WOMEN; FOR THEY ARE VIRGINS. THESE ARE THEY WHICH FOLLOW THE LAMB WHITHERSOEVER HE GOETH. THESE WERE REDEEMED FROM AMONG MEN, BEING THE FIRSTFRUITS UNTO GOD AND TO THE LAMB. AND IN THEIR MOUTH WAS FOUND NO GUILE: FOR THEY ARE WITHOUT FAULT BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD."—*Rev. xiv. 1-5.*

MAY we not regard these verses as a pictorial representation of the *Heaven of Humanity*? If so, the fol-

lowing facts are suggested concerning the unseen realm of the good or the Christly.

I.—It is a scene IN WHICH

CHRIST IS THE CENTRAL FIGURE. "*And I looked (saw) and lo (behold) a (the) Lamb stood (standing) on the Mount Sion.*" No one acquainted with the Scriptures need ask who the Lamb is. Christ is the "Lamb of God." Why is Christ called the Lamb? Is it because of His innocence, or because of His moral and sacrificial character, or both? Morally He was innocent as a lamb, "holy, undefiled." "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Or is it on account of His sacrifice? He was, indeed, a sacrifice; His whole being was a sacrifice. There have been those who have answered these questions to their own satisfaction, and there are now those who render replies without hesitation or doubt; I cannot. My eyes are too dim to penetrate into the rationale of Divine operations. What seems clear is that Christ is the central figure in man's heaven. He stands on the citadel on which all eyes are fastened, and to which all heart's point and all sympathies flow.

II.—It is a scene INTERESTINGLY POPULATED.

First: The population is very numerous. "*An hundred forty and four thousand.*" This I take to be a definite number used to represent an indefinite multitude, a "multitude which no man could number." The dreamer being a Jew his visions are of course full of Jewish facts and sentiments. Hence he thinks of the Jewish scene of worship, Sion, and the Jewish tribes, incalculably numerous. To us, however, all these are mere illustrations of things higher, more important, and lasting. The human tenants in heaven were in number beyond calculation in the days of John, and they have been multiplying ever since.

Secondly: The population is Divinely distinguished. "*His Father's name written on their foreheads.*" Men glory in things that are supposed to distinguish them advantageously from their fellow-men—the attractions of physical beauty, the glitter of wealth, the pomp of power; but the greatest of all distinctions, the grandest and highest, is to have the name of the Great Father manifest in our

lives, written on our very "*foreheads*." (1) It is the most *beautiful* distinction. The face is the beauty of man; there the soul reveals itself sometimes in sunshine and sometimes in clouds. The beauty of the face is not in features but in expressions, and the more it expresses of purity, intelligence, generosity, tenderness, the more beautiful. How beautiful, then, to have God's name radiating in it. God's name is the beauty of the universe. (2) It is the most *conspicuous* distinction. "*In their foreheads*." It is seen whereveryougo, frontingevery object you look at. Godliness cannot conceal itself. Divine goodness is evermore self-revealing. As the face of Moses shone with a mystic radiance when he came down from the Mount after holding fellowship with God, so the lives of all godly men are encircled with a Divine halo. (3) It is the most *honourable* distinction. A man sometimes feels proud when he is told he is like some great statesman, ruler, thinker, reformer. But how transcendently honourable is it to bear in our face the very image of God. Let

us all seek this distinction. With the Father's "name on our foreheads" we shall throw the pageantry of the Shahs, the Emperors, and all the Kings of the earth into contempt.

Thirdly: The population is rapturously happy. "*And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of* (the voice which I heard was the voice of) *harpers harping with their harps: and they sang* (sing) *as it were a new song.*" All souls yonder run into music. Here is music loud as booming billows, pealing thunders, and melodious as the enrapturing strains of the harp. How mean and unworthy are men's views of religious music. "Let us sing to the glory and praise of God," says the leader of public worship. And forthwith a whole congregation breaks into sound. And if the sound is regulated by the harmonious blending of notes the production is called a "Service of Song," and more, alas, is made an article of trade. Large incomes are made by the sale of such

music. Can such be the music of heaven? Nay. True music is the harmony of soul, souls moving ever in accord with the Supreme will. True music consists not in a blending of sounds, whether vocal or instrumental, however charming to the senses, but in sentiments unuttered, perhaps unutterable, yet entrancing to conscience and pleasing to God.

Fourthly: The population is redemptively trained. *"No man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed (purchased) from the earth."* Heaven, it has been said by men of old, is a prepared place for a prepared people. It is verily so. Observe (1) Man requires training for heaven. (2) Redemption is the method of training for heaven. (3) Earth is the scene of this redemptive training.*

Fifthly: The population is spotlessly pure. *"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins."* There are those of our race in heaven who have

never fallen, who have retained their virgin innocence, who required no pardon for their sins, nor regeneration. What millions of the human population die in their infancy and go on unfolding their faculties and invigorating their strength through indefinite ages in scenes of absolute holiness and infallible intelligence. They were not *"redeemed from the earth,"* such redemption they required not, from the dawn of their being they were ushered into the realms of immaculate purity and perfect bliss.

Sixthly: The population is absolutely loyal. *"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."* All follow the Lamb, the Christ of God. Two words, *"FOLLOW ME,"* embody at once the whole duty and perfect Paradise of souls. *"Whithersoever He goeth."* He is always moving. *"The Father worketh hitherto, and I work."* We cannot do exactly what He does, but we can imbibe that spirit which inspires Him in all He does. Would I become a great painter then how shall

* See Breviary, page 259.

I proceed? If I copy the exact style and method of the greatest master of the art, I shall only become a mere mechanic in the profession, never an artist. But if I catch the *genius* of the great master, I may, peradventure, leave him behind and win a place and a distinction all my own. Let us catch the moral genius of Christ.

Seventhly: The population is incorruptibly truthful. "*In their mouth was found no*

guile (lie): for they are without fault before the throne of God" (they are without blemish). No lie! How unlike us! The social atmosphere of our world teems with lies as with microbes. Lies in parliaments, in markets, in churches. The whole world teems with impostors. What a blessed world must that be where all is truth and reality.

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No. XXVII.

The Dissemination of Good and the Destruction of Evil.

"AND I SAW ANOTHER ANGEL FLY IN THE MIDST OF HEAVEN, HAVING THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL TO PREACH UNTO THEM THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH, AND TO EVERY NATION, AND KINDRED, AND TONGUE, AND PEOPLE, SAYING WITH A LOUD VOICE, FEAR GOD, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM; FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME: AND WORSHIP HIM THAT MADE HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF WATERS. AND THERE FOLLOWED ANOTHER ANGEL, SAYING, BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN, THAT GREAT CITY, BECAUSE SHE MADE ALL NATIONS DRINK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER FORNICATION." *Revelation* xiv. 6-8.

IN these verses two subjects are suggested:—

I.—THE DISSEMINATION OF GOOD. The good here is called "*the everlasting (eternal) Gospel.*"

First: The Gospel *in itself* is good. It is at once the mirror and the medium of eternal good. It contains and communicates to man that which reflects the Divine

character and constitutes the heaven of souls. "*Everlasting*,"—eternal. Good is eternal. Unlike evil, it never had a commencement and will never have an end; it is as old as God Himself.

Secondly: The Gospel in *its ministry* is good. "*And I saw another angel fly* (flying) *in the midst of* (mid) *heaven*." It comes from heaven and is conveyed by heavenly messengers to men. Angels are so interested in this Gospel that they speed their flight through mid-heaven bearing its blessed message.

Thirdly: The Gospel in *its universality* is good. "*Having the everlasting* (eternal) *Gospel to preach* (proclaim) *unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred* (tribe), *and tongue, and people*." It overleaps all geographic boundaries, all tribal, national, linguistic distinctions, and addresses *man as man*.

Fourthly: The Gospel in *its purpose* is good. "*Saying with a loud voice* (he saith with a great voice), *Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and*

the sea, and the fountains of waters." The supreme aim of the Gospel is to induce all men to worship Him who made heaven, earth, and sea. Man is made for worship. There is no *instinct* in the soul deeper, stronger, more operative; there is no *service* for the soul more worthy, nay, so worthy and so blest, as that of worship. Worship is the paradise of souls. Here we have—

II.—THE DESTRUCTION OF EVIL. "*And there followed another angel* (another, a second angel followed), *saying Babylon is fallen, is fallen* (fallen, fallen is Babylon), *that great city* (the great), *because she* (which hath) *made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication*." I take Babylon here as standing, not for the capital of Syria, not for Rome, either Pagan or Papal, nor for the site, the masonry, the institutions, or the populations of any city that ever has been or ever will be, but as representing the *spirit* of evil that moulded and mastered the old metropolis of Assyria. Babylon to me stands as the *mighty aggregation of all the moral*

evils at work throughout all society in all the metropolises of the universe. This aggregation of evil is what Paul calls "the world." Two remarks are suggested:—

First: *This aggregation of evil must fall.* Babylon must tumble into dust. The colossal image will not only be smashed into atoms by the "little stone" of truth, but every particle will be borne away by the winds of Divine influence, so that "no place will be found for it." Faith is to overcome the world.

Secondly: This aggregation of evil *falls as the good advances.* The Gospel having been proclaimed to every "nation," and "tongue," and "people," and all brought to worship Him that made heaven and earth, Babylon totters, crumbles, and rots. The

Gospel destroys the *spirit* of evil, and its forms fall to pieces. You may destroy the forms of evil in the habits and institutions of the world, but unless the spirit is extinguished you have done no good. Burn up Rome, but if its spirit remains it will grow and work, and produce, perchance, forms more hideous and oppressive. No Pontiff that ever occupied the Papal chair has ever had more Popery in his nature than can be found in many a Protestant clergyman, aye, and in many a Nonconformist minister too.

CONCLUSION.—Would you have Babylon to fall? Then speed on the Gospel; not the Gospel of sects or of creeds, but the Gospel of the Evangelists.

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THE DANGERS OF EASE.—"Let us beware that our rest become not the rest of stones, which, so long as they are torrent-tossed and thunder-stricken retain their majesty; but, when the stream is silent and the storm past, suffer the grass to cover them, and the lichen to feed on them, and are ploughed down into dust."—RUSKIN.

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

1 John v. 4.

(First Sunday after Easter.)

FROM THE EPISTLE.

"THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH."

WE shall reach the thought of the apostle and may gain help from the truth he teaches if we consider—

I.—THE NEED OF SACRED CONQUEST. In what respects, we may ask, *need* we overcome the world? Is it not something to be enjoyed, to be possessed, to be utilised rather than to be overcome? Has not its Divine Author, our gracious and generous Father, given it to us that we may appropriate its benefits and enrich ourselves with its manifold resources? Undoubtedly. We must clearly understand what John intended to denote by the term "world." He could not have been referring to (1) visible nature, nor to (2) our human affections, nor to (3) honourable achievements in the various spheres of intelligent action. All these things are good in themselves, gifts from the hand of the

Holy One, expressions of His own mind. When we partake of them, when we rejoice in them, when we bring to them our intelligence, our labour, our patient energy we are acting in entire accord with His own will concerning us (Gen. i. 28). John evidently had in his mind not the world as God gave it us for our use, but rather *that perversion of it* which he found to be prevalent and indeed universal, not the world as He made it but as man has marred it; the *selfishness* which distinguished it on every hand, the *shortsightedness* which characterised it and circumscribed its views and aims, the *ungodliness* which pervaded and lowered it, the *vice* which disgraced and corrupted it. Between these things and the souls of men stern war was raging. Only too often victory went with the evil spirit, the sinful tendency, the unholy principle: only too often, with far too sad a constancy, the human spirit was ensnared, baffled, slain. Whence should relief and restoration come? What should restore the day? *This*, said the apostle of Christ, *this* is the victory that overcometh the world,—*our faith*.

II.—THE STRENGTH WHICH IS VICTORIOUS:—faith in Jesus Christ (see v. 5). And that there may be a thorough victory over the evil spirit and the evil practices of the world there must be a faith in Christ which is *complete*.

(1) The acceptance of Him by the intellect, as the one true, Divine Teacher. Men have thought and have tried to overcome the world without the strong aid of religion; by means of moral maxims and philosophical resolutions; by means of early habits and pure home affections: but these do not suffice; spite of the best of them, and many of them are good and even noble, the noxious breath has been inhaled, the poison has been imbibed, the temptation has been admitted, the soul has been defeated. Only Divine truth can enable us to meet and master this mighty enemy. (2) The submission by the soul to His supreme claims; our belief in Christ must be a living faith; that which brings us into close contact and vital union with the Lord Himself. We need not merely to have this truth treasured in our memory, but also to have such love and devotion to Himself as will make that truth a power within the soul, a weapon we can always wield, a shield continually at hand which we can oppose to every coming dart. Only a living faith

in Christ Himself will give virtue and efficacy to our faith in His teaching. And as a matter of practical wisdom we find that we need to cultivate (3) a vivid realisation of the Christian truths we hold (see Heb. xi. 1). By careful, continuous, devout culture we must command the faith which makes the unseen to appear to us the real thing, which brings the distant thing near to us. This will be our strength, our victory. When, by faith, the unseen Saviour is felt to be present with us, in our home and in our shop, as well as in our sanctuary, hearing our every whisper and observing our most trivial action; when, by faith, the cry of the destitute and the sigh of the sorrowful and the mute appeal of the ignorant and the degraded are heard in the inner chamber of the heart; when, by faith, popular applause, momentary triumphs, bodily indulgences, material successes are seen and known to be the poor things *they* are; and when untruthfulness, impurity, intrigue, intemperance, treachery are seen and felt to be the hateful things *they* are; and when a clear conscience, undeviating rectitude, Christian charity, the smile of God are seen and known to be the beautiful, the inestimable, the precious things *they* are; when, by faith, the scenes and shows of

earth are regarded as the fitting shadows that will soon be gone, and the blessed rest and the more blessed activities of heaven are recognised as the approaching and abiding realities that will soon be ours for ever, *then* is our soul armed for the conflict of life: then do we go forth with a strength in which we may encounter our subtlest and our strongest foes, then have we that which always causes us to triumph,—“This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.”

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Luke xix. 26.

(Third Sunday after Easter).

“FOR I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT UNTO EVERY ONE WHICH HATH SHALL BE GIVEN; AND FROM HIM THAT HATH NOT, EVEN THAT HE HATH SHALL BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM.”

THESE words embody a great and far-reaching law—a law to which Christ several times called attention, thus showing that He considered it important that men should recognise its truth and regulate their conduct accordingly. As in the case of much of our

Lord’s teaching, the meaning of the text does not lie upon the surface, it is like the precious ore hidden in the earth’s bosom, and if we would possess it we must dig beneath the surface. These words teach—

I.—That we ONLY TRULY POSSESS WHAT WE USE. At first sight the verse seems contradictory, for it is said of the imaginary person, referred to in the second clause, that while he “hath not” he yet “hath.” Plainly the word “hath” must be used in two different ways. A reference to the parable that precedes this verse, and of which our text is the kernel, will make this clear. He that hath is the man who not only has been endowed by nature with talents but who also *uses* them, and so makes them his own. By “him that hath not” is not meant the poorly gifted—the men of slender abilities—but men who, having gifts of different kinds, *never use* them. This passage, therefore, implies that we only truly possess what we use. Powers and capacities which are allowed to lie idle are not in any real sense our own.

II.—That we INCREASE OUR POWERS BY USE. Our talents are not given to us ready made and fixed in amount. They are like seeds which, by careful cultivation, we may increase indefinitely. To the question—how can we enlarge

and expand them?—our text makes answer that powers and capacities are strengthened and developed by use. To him which hath, *i. e.*, employs and trades with his abilities, shall be given. (1) This is a law of physical life. The blacksmith's arms are stronger than those of other men, because he uses them more. The sailor's eyes are keener than the eyes of landsmen; and here, too, use is the explanation. (2) This is a law of mental life. Some men have more power of mind than others. They can understand, grasp, and judge things better. Sometimes this is because they have been naturally gifted with greater intellectual power, but more often this mental superiority is only the result of the constant and careful exercise of the mind. Therefore, let any one who is wishful to expand his mind and develop its powers, just employ rightly the powers he already has. (3) This is a law of the religious life. Our spiritual powers—love and faith—and our abilities for Christian work and service grow as they are used. You are anxious to take part in some Christian work,—well and good; but what are you doing to carry out your desire—praying that God will grant you ability to teach and

work for Him? A useless prayer, because you are commanded to use the talents you now possess, and prayer can never take the place of obedience. First obey—use what powers you already have—and then you can rightly pray, and the prayer will be heard, the increase given.

III.—That UNUSED TALENTS ARE TAKEN AWAY. He that hath not, *i. e.*, the man who wraps up his heaven-given gifts in a napkin and then buries them, will have these neglected powers taken from him. (1) Physically this is true. Science affords many remarkable illustrations of this. Organs not used in one generation disappear in succeeding ones. (2) Mentally this is true. A mind unemployed gradually narrows and shrivels up, and at last leaves its owner little better than a mere machine. Instances of the partial fulfilment of this law can be seen without going very far afield. (3) Spiritually this is true. The spiritual life, with its capacities and powers of love, faith, and obedience, if neglected and left unused, will droop and die. Here lies the secret of many a decaying life.

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Breviaries.

Christ Sacrificed in Eternity.

"THE LAMB SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."—*Rev.* xiii. 8.

FROM this wonderful declaration we conclude: I.—THAT THE THINGS THAT ARE TO HAPPEN IN THE UNIVERSE IN THE MOST DISTANT FUTURE ARE TO GOD AS FACTS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED. As a fact in this world's history the crucifixion of Christ was enacted above eighteen centuries ago, and yet here it is declared to have occurred before all time, before any creature existed, when He lived alone in the solitudes of eternity. Two things are here disclosed— First: *That God's intelligence is infinite.* He knows not only all that has been, and all that is, but all that ever will be. All the generations that are yet to appear on this earth, with their commerce, politics, literature, religions, are facts to Him. All the worlds and systems which are yet to be launched into immensity are to Him realities. The slaying of Christ on Calvary was a fact to Him ages before His purpose became realised to men.

"Eternity, with all its years,
Stands open to Thy view;
To Thee, great God, there's nothing old appears,
To Thee there's nothing new."

Secondly: *That God's purposes are unfrustratable.* Christ's death was according to God's eternal decree. It was His "determinate counsel," and after millions of ages it was accomplished. What God has purposed must come to pass,—the conversion of the world, the resurrection of the dead, the transactions of the judgment day, &c., all are inevitable things. "Heaven and earth shall pass away." Observe: II.—THAT SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE IS AN ETERNAL PRINCIPLE IN THE CREATION. Here it is in the mind of God before all worlds. Christ was slain before the "*foundations of the world.*" Self-sacrificing love is a new and a rare thing to us, the men of this little planet, because we have fallen from the eternal order of things; but it is an old and common principle in God's creation. First: It is the *root of the universe.* What is the creation but

love going forth in infinite gifts? Every life that breathes, every plant that blooms, every star that shines is a gift of love. Secondly: It is *typified in all material existences*. Where is there a thing to be found throughout the vast domain of nature that is made for itself? All existences work, live, and die for the good of others. "The several kingdoms of nature depend on and, therefore, help each other. The mineral is the solid basis on which is spread out the vegetable,—the body that its vesture clothes. The vegetable directly nourishes the animal. The tree does not grow for itself; it cradles the birds, and feeds animated races, and shades the traveller until he blesses it. Of all the thousand and ninety species of plants that botany has classified, not one, from the vast oak to the weed that springs out of its mould and the moss that clings to its bark, but takes its appointed place in a related family. The atmosphere would lose its salubrity but for the salt and bitter sea. The ground would catch no fertilizing streams if the clouds did not kindly drop them from the sky. The flowers wait for the falling light before they unveil their beauty. All growing things are buttressed up by the vast ribs of everlasting granite that sleep in sunless caverns. Heat, electricity, magnetism, attraction, send their subtle powers through nature, and play through all its works, as unseen and silent as the Eternal Spirit they bear witness of. Everything helps and everything is helped." Thirdly: It *agrees with the moral constitution of the soul*. The soul is so formed (1) That it can recognise nothing morally praiseworthy that does not spring from it. Disinterestedness must be the soul of any conduct it can heartily commend. (2) Its conscience can approve of no act of its own that is not inspired by it. Our consciences have not a single smile for the avaricious and self-seeking. (3) Its happiness can only be realised as it is controlled by it. "He that seeketh his life shall lose it, and he that loseth it shall find it." Self-oblivious benevolence is the fountain of human joy. This eternal principle of self-sacrificing love we must have in us before we can be saved; it is, in fact, salvation. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of God and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." The flesh and the blood here stand for the vitality of Christ. And what was this moral life, the moral essence of Christ, the soul of His soul, the moral blood? *Self-sacrificing love*. And this we must get into us or die. III.—THAT REDEMPTION IS NO AFTER-THOUGHT IN THE ARRANGEMENTS OF THE UNIVERSE. It is true that the slain Lamb of Calvary came to meet and master an evil—the world's depravity. He came to "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." But it was all according to the eternal order of things

Miserably narrow and God-degrading ideas of Christ's work are popular in the pulpits of some of the sects. Sometimes it is spoken of as an expedient which the Almighty took a long time to contrive in order to overcome a state of things that had sprung up in His kingdom. Like some human king He had a great deal to do in order to hit upon the best plan to harmonise His attributes, to reconcile mercy to justice, to maintain the order of His government, and, at the same time, save and forgive repentant rebels. And sometimes it is so spoken of as if the original system which God established with humanity was defective, did not work well, broke down, and thus not only disappointed the Creator, but taxed His wisdom greatly in order to invent an expedient that should meet the difficulty. Away with such notions. They are repugnant to reason, they are an insult to Omniscience, they are a libel on the Gospel, they are obstructive to Christianity. First : God *foresaw the fall* from eternity. This is an undeniable fact. Why did He not prevent it? Ah, why? Secondly : God *ordained the remedy* from eternity. Redemption was no after-thought, it is an essential part, and, perhaps, a primary part of the original scheme of the universe. All that are redeemed to moral order, rectitude, and peace by Christ, are so redeemed "according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." IV.—THAT OUR PLANET WAS PROBABLY FORMED FOR THE SPECIAL PURPOSE OF BECOMING THE THEATRE OF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE LOVE TO MAN. This is saying more than that Christ came into the world. There are men who argue from the littleness of this planet the absurdity of this. But material magnitude is nothing to God ; spiritual existences and moral facts are *vital*ly interesting to Him. But the text leads us beyond,—leads us to believe that this world was made for the express purpose. As God had the idea of redemption before the "foundation of the world," and as the idea is being worked out here, is it not probable that this idea guided Him in its formation? Small in bulk as our planet is, when compared with that of other orbs that roll in splendour under the eye of God, it has a grand moral distinction. Its dust formed the fruits that fed the body of the Son of God. Here He lived, laboured, suffered, and was buried, and here His grand work is being carried on. If it be moral facts that give importance to places, is there a more important spot than this earth?

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Man Training for Heaven.

"NO MAN COULD LEARN THAT SONG, BUT THE HUNDRED AND FORTY AND FOUR THOUSAND WHICH WERE REDEEMED FROM THE EARTH."—*Rev. xiv. 3.*

THE subject of these words is man training for heaven. Notice I.—HEAVEN REQUIRES his training. "*No man could learn the song.*" Man cannot blend in the happy harmony of the celestial state without previous training. Analogy would suggest this. In the physical system every being is fitted to his position, his organism is suited to his locality. These bodies of ours, as now constituted, could live in no other planet than this. In the social system the same principle of fitness is required. The stolid clown could not occupy the professor's chair, nor could he who is reckless concerning law, right, and order, occupy the bench of justice. It is just so in relation to heaven. To feel at home in the society of the holy, cheerfully to serve the Creator and His universe, and to be in harmony with all the laws, operations, and beings in the holy empire, we must manifestly be invested with the same character. But what is the training necessary? (1) Not *mechanical*. Ceremonial religion enjoins this. (2) Not *intellectual*. Theological training may be conducive but it is not sufficient. It is MORAL—the training of the spiritual sympathies, the heart being brought to say, "Thy will be done." No one can "sing the song," blend in the harmonious action of heaven, without this. A man with corrupt sympathies could never sing in heaven, he would shriek. In the midst of happy myriads he would be alone. His darkness would conceal from him the outward sun; his inner flashes of guilt would change for him the God of love into a "consuming fire." II.—REDEMPTION IS THE CONDITION of his training. "*Those who were redeemed from the earth.*" The redemption here referred to is evidently that procured by the system of Christ. The training requires something more than education, it needs *emancipation*, the deliverance of the soul from certain feelings and forces incompatible with holiness, a deliverance from the *guilt* and *power* of evil. The grand characteristic of Christianity is, that it is a power to redeem from all evil. No other system on earth can do this. III.—THE EARTH IS THE SCENE of his training. "*Redeemed from the earth.*" The brightest fact in the history of the dark world is, that it is a redemptive scene. Amidst all the clouds and storms of depravity and sorrow that sweep over our path, this fact rises up before us a bright orb that shall one day dispel all gloom

and hush all tumult. Thank God this is not a retributive but a redemptive scene. But it should be remembered that it is not only a redemptive scene but the *only* redemptive scene. There is no redemptive influence in heaven—it is not required—nor, we fear, in hell—there it is needed but, perhaps, may never come. A wonderful world is this! True it is but a spark amidst the suns of the universe—a tiny leaf in the mighty forests! Let the light be quenched and the leaf be destroyed their absence would not be felt. Still it has a moral history the most momentous. Here Christ lived, laboured, died. Here millions of spirits are trained for heaven. What Marathon was to Greece, and Waterloo to Europe, this little earth is to the creation. Here the great battles of the spiritual universe are fought. It is the Thermopylae of the creation.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

SHORT NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

(No. 9.) Spiritual Childhood.

“PUTTING AWAY THEREFORE ALL WICKEDNESS, AND ALL GUILLE, AND HYPOCRISIES, AND ENVIES, AND ALL EVIL SPEAKINGS, AS NEWBORN BABES, LONG FOR THE SPIRITUAL MILK WHICH IS WITHOUT GUILLE, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY UNTO SALVATION; IF YE HAVE TASTED THAT THE LORD IS GRACIOUS.”—1 *Peter* ii. 1-3. (*R.V.*)

IF we regard the topic of these verses as *Spiritual Childhood* we shall be led to notice I.—Some of the SIGNS of Spiritual Childhood. The indications that men are not only spiritual children, but *growing* spiritual children are (1) *what they lack*, viz.,—“wickedness,”—or malice; “guile,” or deceit and craftiness—“hypocrisies,” acting an assumed part as though life was simply a stage for display, “envies,” and “evil speakings,” the first describing the malign spirit, the second the speech that spirit inspires. (2) *What they long for*. “Spiritual milk.” That healthy appetite leads us to notice II.—The chief NOURISHMENT of Spiritual Childhood. “Spiritual milk.” Milk is probably the best standard of all food, containing all the constituents that can nourish the body. So God’s word is “milk.” The true child of God desires it “without guile,” *i.e.*, unadulterated—simple. Perverted appetite is both a sign of disease and a cause of disease; so natural appetite is both an index of health and a means to

health. Get true appetite by activities that whet hunger, and also by weaning yourselves from unwholesome and accustoming yourselves to true diet. "Thy word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loveth it." III.—The true DEVELOPMENT of Spiritual Childhood. What is it? Growth. Childhood without growth is a monstrosity, so Spiritual Childhood without growth is a monstrosity. Notice (1) there is to be *growth*. "That ye may grow." Piety is the art of right growth. (2) There is to be growth *to a high ideal*. "Unto salvation." Not only to evade misery, to escape guilt, but to attain holiness. Not only spiritual emancipation but spiritual citizenship. (3) That ideal is *to be developed from an actual experience*. All right growth depends on right beginnings. Progress is only true as the entrance was right. "Tasted,"—*surely* tasted, no delusion; *only* tasted, but the beginning. Out of such a blessed beginning as the tasting of the goodness and graciousness of God "does Christian life grow." Oliver Cromwell's dictum is true here, "A man never rises so high as when he does not know whither he is going."

"Happy is he
Who cannot measure what he hopes to be."

EDITOR,

(No. 10.) The Soul Temple.

"UNTO WHOM COMING, A LIVING STONE, REJECTED INDEED OF MEN, BUT WITH GOD ELECT, PRECIOUS, YE ALSO, AS LIVING STONES, ARE BUILT UP A SPIRITUAL HOUSE, TO BE A HOLY PRIESTHOOD, TO OFFER UP SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. BECAUSE IT IS CONTAINED IN SCRIPTURE, BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNER STONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS: AND HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM SHALL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME. FOR YOU THEREFORE WHICH BELIEVE IS THE PRECIOUSNESS: BUT FOR SUCH AS DISBELIEVE, THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THE SAME WAS MADE THE HEAD OF THE CORNER; AND, A STONE OF STUMBLING, AND A ROCK OF OFFENCE; FOR THEY STUMBLE AT THE WORD, BEING DISOBEDIENT: WHEREUNTO ALSO THEY WERE APPOINTED."—1 Peter ii. 4-8. (*R.V.*)

WHATEVER may be the confusion of metaphors that the mere critic may think he discovers in this passage, the devout student will find here a momentous truth, a truth that, by all the figures he here employs, Peter

seeks to illustrate and enforce,—namely, *that the worth of life depends upon its relationship to Christ*. In other words, that relationship to Christ determines man's sanctity or shame, man's salvation or destruction. This is brought out as we consider I.—THE BUILDER IS A TYPE OF EVERY MAN. Paul, in detail, uses the figure to which Peter here does little more than allude. (1) *Every man is building*. Incessantly, day and night, he is erecting a moral structure. (2) *The character he is thus erecting has a twofold function*. It is (a) his *monument*. By it he is known to others. It is (b) his *habitation*—the sphere in which he moves. (3) *Man builds well or ill as he regards or disregards the Great Architect*. The wise man is the godly man. He “comes,” comes thoughtfully, comes constantly to “the living stone,” even The Christ; this stone is (a) *rejected* by men, but is (b) *elect* of God;—that is, Divinely chosen, and (c) *precious*, rare, beautiful, perfect, of consummate worth. II.—THE TEMPLE IS A TYPE OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN. He is not only builder, but the building; not only artificer, but Temple. (1) *A Temple well built*. Such a foundation; such a corner stone. (2) *A Temple in harmony with its foundation stone and corner stone*. No incongruity; the foundation of marble and the walls of clay, the corner stone of sapphire and the walls of mud. Christ Foundation and Corner Stone; that is, strength and model. The livingness of Christ, as living stone, ensures the livingness of the entire Christian character, for Christians are “living stones.” The relationship of living souls to the living Christ, ensures the highest development of spiritual vitality. A Temple, but a Temple of living stones; a Temple, but, as Paul says, a Temple that “grows.” III.—THE PRIESTHOOD IS ALSO A TYPE OF THE CHRISTIAN MAN. Here is a further change of figure. Christian men are not only “a spiritual house,” but “a royal priesthood.” The Builder, the Temple, the Priest, the Sacrifice, is each in some respect an illustration of the Christian life. Every detail of outward worship is but part of a parable of inward, soul worship. The music of the lip, the reverent head, the bowed knee, the slain life of the victim, all simply adumbrate spiritual harmony, spiritual awe, spiritual loyalty, spiritual self-sacrifice. And all is “acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

EDITOR.



(No. 11.) The Glory of the Church as a Commonwealth.

"BUT YE ARE AN ELECT RACE, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION, THAT YE MAY SHEW FORTH THE EXCELLENCIES OF HIM WHO CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT: WHICH IN TIME PAST WERE NO PEOPLE, BUT NOW ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD: WHICH HAD NOT OBTAINED MERCY, BUT NOW HAVE OBTAINED MERCY."—1 *Peter* ii. 9, 10. (*R.V.*)

HAVING glanced sadly at those who refuse relationship with Christ, Peter turns with delighted gaze to the Christian Church as a *race*, a *priesthood*, a *nation*, a *people*. Here we notice I.—THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH IN ITS CHARACTERISTICS. As a Commonwealth it is (*a*) *An elect race*,—elect, choice; a race, of noble stock and noble kindreds. (*b*) *A royal priesthood*. "A kingdom of priests." "Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God." (*c*) *A holy nation*. Consecrated citizenship. (*d*) *A people for God's own possession*. The older version has "peculiar." The meaning is, belonging to God. The Church is the "very own" of God; first, *by acquirement*,—"He gave," &c.; second, *by endearment*,—"He loved," &c.

II.—THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH IN ITS MISSION. Here is its great purpose—"That." This throws us back on the thought in the word "elect,"—chosen for what end, choice for what uses? The purpose is (1) *A great manifestation*. "That ye may shew forth." Tell out by word and deed some great message. What? (2) *A great manifestation of the true greatness of God*. "The excellencies of Him." The virtues, the glories of God; what (*a*) a *lofty* theme; (*b*) *boundless* theme; (*c*) *sacred* theme. (3) *A manifestation of the excellencies of God in blessing men*. "Who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." The Spirit of God calls (*a*) by His word; (*b*) by the ministry; (*c*) by conscience. The Spirit of God calls from (*a*) the darkness of *ignorance*; (*b*) the darkness of *guilt*; (*c*) the darkness of *dread*. The Spirit of God calls to (*a*) the "marvellous light" of *truth*; (*b*) the "marvellous light" of *holiness*; (*c*) the "marvellous light" of *love*; (*d*) the "marvellous light" of *heaven*.

III.—THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH IN ITS PRESENT CONDITION AS CONTRASTED WITH THE PAST HISTORY OF ITS MEMBERS. "*Which in times past*,"—the mention of this is to kindle gratitude, to inspire humility, to awaken watchfulness. "*Were no people*,"—that is, were separate, solitary, stragglers on the great highway of life, not bound together by

the self-organizing power of brotherly love. "*But now the people of God.*" Two thoughts are here—"the people," *i.e.*, consolidated ; "of God," that is, consecrated. "Which had not obtained mercy." Mercy was ever seeking them, but was hid, or undiscovered, or rejected. "*But now have obtained mercy.*" Realised it as their own. We want God's *pity*, which is care for the weak ; His *compassion*, which is care for the suffering ; but also His *mercy*, which is care for the sinful. And we have it. This description is an appeal to every thoughtful heart. EDITOR.

(No. 12.) The Plea Against Disorderly Passions.

"BELOVED, I BESEECH YOU AS SOJOURNERS AND PILGRIMS, TO ABSTAIN FROM FLESHLY LUSTS, WHICH WAR AGAINST THE SOUL ; HAVING YOUR BEHAVIOUR SEEMLY AMONG THE GENTILES ; THAT, WHEREIN THEY SPEAK AGAINST YOU AS EVIL-DOERS, THEY MAY BY YOUR GOOD WORKS, WHICH THEY BEHOLD, GLORIFY GOD IN THE DAY OF VISITATION."—1 *Peter* ii. 11, 12. (R.V.)

THERE is a threefold plea here ; a plea that is affectionate, as well as argumentative, against an evil that needs dealing with to-day as well as, and, perhaps, as much as in Peter's day. Noting it, we observe I.—INDULGENCE IN DISORDERLY PASSIONS IS BECOMING NEITHER TO OUR PRESENT CONDITION NOR TO OUR DESTINY. We are *sojourners* ; whence are we from ? We are *foreigners* ; where are we now ? We are *pilgrims* ; whither are we going ? "Arise and depart, this is not your rest." II.—THE INFLUENCE OF DISORDERLY PASSIONS IS HOSTILE TO OUR OWN INWARD LIFE. They "war against the soul." The "fleshly lusts," which are gluttony, intemperance, voluptuousness, irritability, and such like, war against *reason*, defying and dishonouring it ; against *memory*, burdening and crushing it ; against *hope*, darkening and transforming it into terror ; against *imagination*, polluting and degrading it ; against *conscience*, numbing and maiming, though they cannot kill it ; against *the affections*, ravaging and spoiling them ; and so "against the soul." III.—FREEDOM FROM THESE PASSIONS WILL MAKE OUR OUTWARD LIFE A SOCIAL BLESSING. "Abstain from them." Be far away from them. What will be the result ? Three facts are suggested in the description of the result. (1) Our outward life is *closely scrutinised*. "They behold" it. (2) Our outward

life is *readily calumniated*. "Speak against you." Gossip and slander are eager. (3) Our outward life *should be beautiful*. No human loveliness, no natural scenery so influential as "good works." Souls ought to have a grandeur, a richness, a variety transcending all the fascination of flowers, all the glory of mountains, all the majesty of the sea. The noblest beauties are "the beauties of holiness." (4) Such outward life *glorifies God*. (a) *Directly*. For it is a tribute of praise to Him. (b) *Indirectly*. For it leads others to praise Him. A holy example is often "the gate beautiful" by which men enter into the city of God and go up to the knowledge of Him and communion with Him.

EDITOR.

(No. 13.) The Christian as a Citizen.

"BE SUBJECT TO EVERY ORDINANCE OF MAN FOR THE LORD'S SAKE: WHETHER IT BE TO THE KING, AS SUPREME; OR UNTO GOVERNORS, AS SENT BY HIM FOR VENGEANCE ON EVIL-DOERS AND FOR PRAISE TO THEM THAT DO WELL. FOR SO IS THE WILL OF GOD, THAT BY WELL-DOING YE SHOULD PUT TO SILENCE THE IGNORANCE OF FOOLISH MEN: AS FREE, AND NOT USING YOUR FREEDOM FOR A CLOKE OF WICKEDNESS, BUT AS BONDSERVANTS OF GOD. HONOUR ALL MEN. LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD. FEAR GOD. HONOUR THE KING."—1 *Peter* ii. 13-17. (*R.V.*)

THERE were, doubtless, special difficulties about Christian Citizenship for those to whom Peter wrote—men scattered, among aliens, under despots. If true citizenship was possible to them, *à fortiori* is it to us. We notice I.—CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP INVOLVES MANY RELATIONSHIPS. (1) *To RULERS*, "kings," "governors." (2) *To hostile onlookers*. "Foolish men." (3) *To the entire population of the country*. "All men." (4) *To the Church of Christ*. "The Brotherhood." II.—CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP HAS FOR ITS SUPREME MOTIVE THE WILL OF GOD. *Obey*, because He ordains government; *do well*, because He will have foolish men silenced. Be, in all relationships, "*bond-servants of God*." III.—CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP INSPIRED BY SUCH A MOTIVE WILL DEVELOPE THE NOBLEST VIRTUES IN HUMAN CHARACTER. What are they? Obedience (*Ver.* 13); Honour for man as man (*Ver.* 17); Christian Catholicity (*Ver.* 17); Piety (*Ver.* 17); Genuine Loyalty (*Ver.* 13 and 17).

EDITOR.

(No. 14.) The Christian as a Servant.

(For the Second Sunday after Easter.)

FROM THE EPISTLE.

“SERVANTS, BE IN SUBJECTION TO YOUR MASTERS WITH ALL FEAR; NOT ONLY TO THE GOOD AND GENTLE, BUT ALSO TO THE FROWARD. FOR THIS IS ACCEPTABLE, IF FOR CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD A MAN ENDURETH GRIEFS, SUFFERING WRONGFULLY. FOR WHAT GLORY IS IT, IF, WHEN YE SIN. AND ARE BUFFETED FOR IT, YE SHALL TAKE IT PATIENTLY? BUT IF, WHEN YE DO WELL, AND SUFFER FOR IT, YE SHALL TAKE IT PATIENTLY, THIS IS ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD. FOR HEREUNTO WERE YE CALLED: BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR YOU, LEAVING YOU AN EXAMPLE, THAT YE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS: WHO DID NO SIN, NEITHER WAS GUILF FOUND IN HIS MOUTH: WHO, WHEN HE WAS REVILED, REVILED NOT AGAIN; WHEN HE SUFFERED, THREATENED NOT; BUT COMMITTED HIMSELF TO HIM THAT JUDGEETH RIGHTEOUSLY: WHO HIS OWNSELF BARE OUR SINS IN HIS BODY UPON THE TREE, THAT WE, HAVING DIED UNTO SINS, MIGHT LIVE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS; BY WHOSE STRIPES YE WERE HEALED. FOR YE WERE GOING ASTRAY LIKE SHEEP; BUT ARE NOW RETURNED UNTO THE SHEPHERD AND BISHOP OF YOUR SOULS.”—1 *Peter* ii. 18-25. (*R. V.*)

THIS passage indicates I.—THE DUTY of the Christian as a servant. (1) *Subjection.* Obedience, since obedience is the essential condition of service. Fulfil employers' commands; discharge masters' tasks. This simple rudimentary duty needs to be insisted on. (2) *Subjection with due honour for master.* “Fear,” not terror. The craven is not the product of Christianity. But shrinking from transgressing the Master's will. How observance of this regulation would oil the wheels of the household, of the market, &c.

II.—THE DIFFICULTIES of the Christian as a wronged servant. There is no one-sided view of social duty here. (1) *Difficulties often arise from the injustice of employers.* Some masters are “good and gentle.” What an exquisite ideal for masters in the home, merchants in the office, manufacturers in the warehouse. All ought to be. But some are “froward,” or crooked, like a stick you do not know how to hold. The warped natures of niggardly, or irritable, or grinding masters cause many servants to be “buffeted”; that is, struck as with a fist. Primarily the reference may have been to physical brutality, but it bears equally on the words

that smite and wound. (2) *Such difficulties when rightly met bring honour to man and glory to God.* Patience flashes as a diadem on human foreheads. This diadem is a crown to be cast in honour at the feet of God (ver. 20). III.—THE DIGNITY of the Christian as a suffering servant. There is dignity (1) *Inasmuch as a suffering servant may resemble our blessed Saviour.* Such suffering gives an opportunity of following in His steps who was (a) *Perfect yet wronged.* “Who did no sin.” (b) *Reviled yet unreviling.* “When He was reviled,” &c. (c) *Suffering yet not vindictive.* “Threatened not.” (d) *Patient because trustful.* “Committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” Thus there are the features and the secret of such suffering as will be an imitation of The Christ. There is dignity (2) *Inasmuch as for our salvation our Lord became a suffering servant.* His mission was the highest service in the universe, and in fulfilling it He was a suffering servant,—*burdened* He relieved us, *dead* He quickened us, *diseased* He healed us, *wandering* He restored us. And this work meant pain, suffering, agony to Him. The highest glory of our life is when in any faint degree it is permitted to resemble and re-echo His.

EDITOR.

KNOWING, MORE THAN FEELING.—“As on a cold misty day, when the sun is hidden from our eyes, we are so oppressed by the clamminess of the chill damp upon the surface of our bodies, and by the heavy gloom around, that we scarce feel the presence of the light and heat, and yet the light and heat are there, else we should be in utter darkness and our bodies would die; even so many hearts at many times, when some mist hides from them the presence of their Lord, feel nothing but their own coldness and numbness, and all seems dark around them, and yet in their inmost selves they believe and love, else their souls would be dead, and they would be past feeling, and would not pine for more light and love.”—Dr. PUSEY.

Pulpit Handmaids.

THE MIND OF THE MASTER.*

I SHOULD not, I think, be happy in addressing you this morning if I omitted to assure you of my grateful sense of the confidence and goodwill of which the position which you have been so kind as to ask me to occupy is both the expression and the proof. I do not pretend to be indifferent to the good opinion of my brethren. I should think none the better of myself if I were. I trust, indeed, that my chief concern is to be accepted of Him whom we all acknowledge as our one Master, and to whom alone we stand or fall; and that in comparison with the joy of His approval it is a very small thing with me to be judged of you, or of man's judgment. But we, as Nonconformists, who cannot look for ecclesiastical rank and titles, or for much social distinction, can least of all afford to despise those honourable sentiments of pleasure and of pride that spring from the consciousness that we live in the love and approbation of our fellows. Nor will it be the feeling of any of us, I am sure, that, slender as may be the respect which the world at large is inclined to accord to us, we are without recognition and reward, if we meet with any evidence of the affection and trust of those who are our companions in labour.

It is with some sadness of heart, and with a sense of something lacking, that we gather together to-day. For we cannot but think of the venerable form and genial face of him who presided over our last assembly, and who spoke to us then what proved to be his farewell words. Mr. Lloyd was a part of these meetings, and seemed to be an essential part of them. And though we cannot be too thankful that in the goodness of God his place is so worthily filled, and his work carried on with so much judgment and sympathy by our present treasurer, still we mourn, and shall long continue to mourn, the loss which we have sustained. Yet we shall honour our brother's memory best, not by bewailing his departure, but by walking in his steps. And surely the remembrance of the zeal which he manifested should provoke very many. To me there was something noble and memorable in the energy of his service during the last years of his life. When he came to reside in our midst he was in uncertain health, and was already beginning to feel the burden of age. In these circumstances he

* The Address delivered to the Congregational Union of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire by the Rev. H. A. THOMAS, M.A., Chairman for 1885, at Weston-super-Mare, March 24th.

might reasonably have claimed the right to forbear working. But that right was one on which he had no inclination to insist. And until the night came he laboured for us and our churches, and for the kingdom of God, with unremitting patience and unselfish devotion, missing, perhaps, the reputation he might have achieved if he had concentrated his strength in the city which he had made his home, and which would not have been slow to appreciate his capacity and applaud his public spirit, but in nowise losing the reward which he valued the most. Nor is there anything I know of that we may more earnestly desire than that the kind of ambition by which he was inspired should become a common thing amongst us, and that the problem how best to serve the Church of Christ, and promote the spiritual well-being of the community, should be felt to be the most fascinating that can occupy the minds of men.

It is a difficulty which is felt, I imagine, by most who are placed in a position like mine, to determine what topic to select for consideration. There are so many fields of enquiry into which we are invited to enter. Which shall we choose?

Shall we re-examine the principles of church order and government to which we are attached, and seek to assure ourselves of the security of their foundation and of their excellence when properly applied? That would not be a novel attempt; but, well-worn as the subject is, it is never undeserving of serious attention.

Or shall we ask what it is in these days that we do verily believe and ought to preach? What is the heart and soul of the message which the Church is bound to deliver? What is undoubted and fundamental truth, and what is only opinion? That is a delicate but very interesting and important question to handle.

Or shall we expatiate on the character and scope of the work which it is the Church's duty to undertake in relation to the movements and tendencies of the time, and in view of the changing conditions of society? The discussion of such a topic would not be unseasonable, or useless, one would hope.

Or shall we consider, not the work to be done, but the best methods to be employed in the prosecution of it? Shall our talk be of machinery and appliances? Even on these points also something probably still remains to be said.

But I hope it will not be felt that I have chosen unwisely if I have decided not to ask your attention this morning to any of these matters, but to pursue, rather, a line of meditation which will afford us little of the pleasing excitement which is born of controversy, but which I believe we

shall acknowledge to be supremely important and worthy of our most earnest deliberation. It has seemed to me that I might avail myself to the best advantage of the opportunity which you have given to me if I were to ask, not what are our ecclesiastical principles, or what is our message, or our work, or the best modes of carrying on the work, but coming still nearer home, with a yet more searching enquiry, to ask what manner of men we ought to be who hold the principles or do the work, to consider what mind should be in us, what spirit we should be of, in all the manifold service in which we are engaged.

This, I take it, is the great and all-important matter—this, the one thing that is needful—not that we should belong to this church or the other; not that we should hold any particular set of opinions, or be busy with any particular class of duties; not that we should be adopting this method or that, or using these appliances or those; but that wherever we may be, and however we may be called, and whatever we may be doing, we should be right in motive, in spirit, and in aim, according to the truest and most exalted standard of rightness that has yet been revealed to us.

Now, so stated, this may seem so obvious a thing to some as to be scarcely worth re-stating, and they will be ready to put it aside with a degree of impatience as a commonplace of Christian ethics about which everybody is agreed.

And yet have we not observed that, practically, it often appears that the emphasis is not laid upon this necessity of being right-minded as the great and prime necessity; but that other things receive more consideration and appear to be more in request. For instance, we sometimes hear men saying, if not explicitly, at least by their conduct and by their criticisms and judgments, that the principal thing is to be living a life of practical usefulness. "Let a man take his part," it seems to be said, "in the work of the world or of the Church. Let him do something. Let him do all that he can. Let him make himself useful. That is the first thing that is required of him. The field is wide; the labourers are few. The time is short. The work presses. It is workers that are wanted." So the great thing is held to be that a man should be at work—which indeed *is* a great thing, but not the greatest.

And it is not strange that the stress should thus often be laid upon the work to be done, rather than upon the spirit of the man who is to do it.

For, in the first place, in the ordinary business of the world the thing that is needed the most is that a man should do his work well, and not that he should do it in the right spirit. The manufacturer looks for

capable hands, not for loyal and loving hearts. He will not have a man of bad character, perhaps; but his first question, and often his only question, is, "Will this man do efficiently what is required of him?" And the question as to the motive by which he may be actuated, or the feelings he may cherish towards his employer or his fellow-workmen is scarcely so much as asked. That is not the manufacturer's concern. It is the solid, tangible, marketable result that he thinks of. That is the habit of the world; and it is not to be wondered at that we should come, more or less, under the influence of this habit in the view we take of the work that men do for the promotion of God's kingdom; and that we should think more of the quantity and quality of it than of the spirit in which it is done.

Again, the amount of work, and in some measure its quality also, can be computed and recorded. It can be reckoned up and set down in rows of figures in Reports and Church Manuals. It is open to observation and is capable of tolerably accurate description. It appeals to the eye and the ear. But there is no possibility of any similar advertisement of all the hidden life of feeling, of aspiration and of holy purpose that lies behind the work that is accomplished; or, as unhappily it may be, does *not* lie behind it. That is, for the most part, a secret with God and the individual soul; and being thus out of sight it is easily forgotten and its importance underrated. It is so much easier to remember and to appreciate that which can be reckoned up and put on record.

And, further, it must be confessed that often when the need of service is great and pressing, it may seem to be the thing of most urgent importance, even in regard to the kingdom of Heaven, that the work should be done—done by somebody, done by anybody who will and can do it—let his aim and motive be what they may. "I want workers," you will hear some leader of a Christian enterprise exclaim—"I want workers and I must get them and I cannot afford to enquire too carefully into motives. The higher the motive the better, no doubt; but whether it be good, or indifferent, or worse, the work must be done. These sick people must be visited; these children must be taught; these mission-stations must be supplied; these meetings must be addressed. I cannot wait for men who are all that one could wish in heart and mind. The demands are urgent and I must get what men I can. That is the first and essential thing,—that the work should be done."

So it is not a strange thing that our thoughts should often be rather of the work itself, and the necessity for it, than of the spirit and character of the worker.

But it may be worth while for us to pause in the midst of the busy life we are living and ask what profit there is likely to be to ourselves in the work we are doing, and what chance there is of its finding acceptance with our Master, and indeed what chance there is of its being of much permanent value to society at large and to those whom we may be seeking directly to serve, if it be not done with a true heart and in a right spirit. What does it amount to—the work that is otherwise done? What moral value is in it? “It is a great thing,” it is said, “for a man to be useful.” It is something, truly. But whether it is a great thing or not depends a good deal on the kind of usefulness. It is better to be useful, no doubt, in the lowest sense, than to be of no use—or, worse than that, positively harmful. It is better to be doing something, though it be ever so little, for the good of the world than to be simply a mischief-monger, or a cumberer of the ground. Most certainly it is an excellent thing to be useful.

And yet mere usefulness may be a small thing for a man who is a living soul. I am useful, am I? It is well. So are the clothes I wear. So are the shoes upon my feet. So is the house that I live in. I am useful; but what is not useful? And, in the lower sense, how many things are far more useful than I? I may be busy enough, but I cannot compete with the printing press, or the steam engine in point of usefulness. There are not many things that are more useful, on occasions, than a paper bag. But in the recent Industrial Exhibition in Bristol a machine was shewn at work which was capable of folding, cutting, pasting, and turning out complete, and with extraordinary precision, and faultless execution, something like 250 paper bags a minute. What can I do for the convenience of society in comparison with that ingenious piece of mechanism? No! it may be but a small thing to be useful. The greater matter is to be useful *as a man*; and my use as a man depends on the kind of man that I am, on the mind that is in me, on the spirit of which I am possessed. It is not the amount of work I get through, but the soul which is in the work, which counts for most. It is this which is of the highest and most abiding use.

What, then, is the true spirit of service? That is a question that may be answered very promptly. The mind that should be in us, in all the work of our life, is the mind which was seen in Christ. That I take for granted. And so our enquiry now for a moment or two must be this—In what spirit did Christ do His work? What was the mind of the Master?

I note first, *that the spirit which was in Him was the spirit of faith.*

He was the supreme exemplar of faith—"the Captain," as the writer to the Hebrews expresses it, "and Perfecter of faith." He believed in God. He believed in man. He believed in Himself. He had faith.

He believed in God. It may seem strange to some ears to speak thus of Christ—strange and unbecoming. And it would be unbecoming if we meant nothing more by "believing" than the assent of the mind to a proposition presented to it for acceptance. But the believing, which is another name for faith, which involves the vision of the invisible and the recognition of its nature, its worth, its glory—that is much more than mental acquiescence. And, using the word in this largest and scriptural sense, there is nothing inappropriate in saying of Jesus that He believed in God. We mean by it that although there is nothing in the record to shew that He was endowed with any sense or faculty differing in kind from those which belong to the race whose nature He assumed and in whose likeness He was made, by which it was possible for Him, as it is not possible for His brethren, to apprehend unseen and eternal things, He yet ever enjoyed the vision of God and dwelt in the light of His presence. Had He retained for Himself when He was formed in fashion as a man, any gift by the possession and exercise of which He would be exempt from the perils and the temptations to which those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren are exposed, it would have been idle—it would have been a mockery—to bid us look to Him as the highest example of faith. Had He walked by sight He might have taught us many things, but He could not have been our leader in faith. Faith is impossible when it is not necessary. For Him it *was* necessary when He dwelt among us as one of ourselves, sharing our sorrows and making Himself subject to the limitations of our lot. It was necessary and therefore it was possible. Being man He could *believe* in the Eternal, Immortal, Invisible God. And He did. The world to Him was full of God. The birds were fed by Him, and by Him the flowers were arrayed in their garments of beauty. God was the one great Fact of life—the permanent Reality, the Source and End of all. Forsaken by the world, and forsaken even by His chosen friends, He would yet not be alone, for He would be with God. He walked with God. He communed with God. He rested in God. Nor was the Eternal to Him simply a Principle, an Energy, a Law, an all-pervading Force. God was His Father, and as He realised His presence, so He recognised in Him all those qualities and affections which are suggested by the name of Father. There were, in those days when He dwelt among us, as in

our own, many painful problems, social and otherwise, that seemed hard of solution ; and to many a perplexed and troubled soul it might easily have seemed that no righteous and beneficent Being could be ruling in the earth. Where were the signs of it ? What did Jesus see as He looked around Him on the condition of men ? Ignorance, want, misery, degradation, oppression, cruelty—these were the things that met His eye. A sad spectacle it was, indeed, which it was often His lot to behold ; and sad sounds they were that fell upon His ears. He saw the people, wandering, forsaken, like sheep in the desert without a shepherd. He saw them afflicted with all manner of sicknesses and all manner of diseases. Wherever He went there were men in pain and sorrow. He saw them blind and lame, palsied, leprous, paralysed, tormented by bodily pain, or, still worse, by evil spirits. He saw them worn and weary with perpetual care. He saw them carrying their dead to burial with breaking hearts. Such things He looked upon as day by day He went about His work. And were all these hapless sufferers in the hands of a just and merciful God ? Were all these sons of affliction the sons of a Divine Father ? Was God over all, and was God the Eternal Goodness and the Eternal Love ? Was that credible ?

It was credible to Him, and more than credible. It was a fact, never to be doubted. Love was ruling notwithstanding all, and love the wisest and the mightiest—love unconquerable and most compassionate and tender. God was in the world and He loved it. That was the faith of Jesus. He saw Him who is invisible. He believed in God.

And He believed in man. He was often grieved at His disciples because of their want of faith in Him, but they never had reason to complain of His want of faith in them. One is almost tempted indeed to say, if it may be said with reverence, that He was inclined to trust them too far. For how should there have been the surprise and the sorrow which He manifested when their faith failed, as often it did, had it not been for a generosity of confidence on His part which was more than they merited. It is remarkable, at least, and beautiful to note how He trusted these young men whom He called to His side. Who but Himself would ever have had confidence in such instruments ? It was no light work which was given them to do ; and if at first they had understood the burden of responsibility that was to be laid upon them, they would surely have been appalled and dismayed. Who were they that they should undertake a task so gigantic, so hopeless, as that which was assigned to them ? They were to go out into the world which had crucified their Master, and they

were to go in the name of the crucified, and were to bring the world to His feet. They were to be prepared for persecution, for hatred, for scorn, for death. They were not to be moved by any of these things; they were to go forward in the face of all, delivering their message, converting mankind—this handful of Galilean peasants. Who could trust them with such a commission? Their Master could. And He did. He believed in the possibilities that were in them. He believed in their powers of endurance and their capacity for growth. He believed in their courage, in their fidelity, in their steadfastness. He had faith in their faith. Nor was His trust easily discouraged. In the hour of emergency they all forsook Him and fled. But it was not so easy to forfeit His confidence. He trusted them again and bade them afterwards—those panic-stricken followers who had fled like frightened sheep—go forth and make disciples of all nations. There was one of the company who had failed more egregiously than the rest. Peter had not only deserted Him, but he had denied Him. He denied Him though he had been explicitly warned. He denied Him, not once but thrice. Peter will surely not be trusted any more! After such a fall he can never be reckoned upon! Jesus did not think so, however. He saw that there was a truer and deeper and more steadfast Peter than the world had discovered yet; and He gave into Peter's charge the feeblest and the most needy of His flock—those for whom it was of the first importance that a true and trustworthy guardian should be provided, inasmuch as they were little able to care for themselves, and might easily be led astray. How could He better say that He had not given up hope of Peter? And, afterwards, when there arose one who fought against Him and strove to hinder His cause with all the energy of which his passionate nature was capable, He trusted even him—Saul the persecutor, the injurious, the blasphemer,—and counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry and laying upon him daily the care of all the churches.

Nor was it the apostles only that He trusted. He had faith in the common people. He believed in those who had ceased to believe in themselves. He believed in Zaccheus and saved him by His trust. He believed in her who was brought to Him as one fit only to be stoned—that, sinful as she was, she was by no means wholly and irredeemably bad. He believed in the lost sheep—that they were not so hopelessly lost but that they would come when they heard the True Shepherd's voice; and He went to search for them in the wilderness, in the hope that He might lead them home. This was His spirit. It is a matter of common remark

that He loved those in whom there seemed to be little that was lovable. It is not, perhaps, noticed so often, but it is equally true, that He trusted those in whom there seemed to be little that could justify trust. And has not the Divine trust in man been one of the most striking characteristics of the dispensation of grace and freedom which Christ inaugurated? Christ has given Himself to us freely and without conditions—entering into no contract, making no bargain, exacting no pledge. He has put Himself at our disposal that we may do with Him as we will—serve or persecute, honour or despise, accept or refuse, worship or crucify, anoint with the oil of adoring love, or wound with the sharp thorns of indifference or contempt. He has given Himself to us, in a word, trusting to what is good and honourable in us that we will not do despite to the unspeakable gift. He has trusted us with Himself. And He has trusted us with liberty, depending on us that we will not abuse it and make it an occasion for the flesh. And He has trusted us with the gospel—the Bread of God—reckoning upon us that we will not keep it in our hands for our own private use and gratification, but will distribute it far and wide for the life and nourishment of those for whom, not less than for ourselves, it has been broken. He has committed the gospel to our trust. As it was in the beginning, so it is now ; *He believes in man.*

And He believed in Himself He had faith in the voices from above and from within which told Him what He was and what His mission and work were to be ; and in that work and mission He believed to the end. He had little human support to rely upon. John the Baptist bore witness to Him at first ; but when He persevered in the ministry for which He believed Himself to be anointed, and showed no sign of striking a blow for the deliverance of Israel, then John the Baptist wavered, and wondered in his dreary prison-house by the sea, whether, after all, this was He that should come. Peter, in a moment of inspiration, seemed to catch His meaning and to share in His spirit, and to realise that He who was doing the work of the Son of Man was also the Christ, the Son of the living God ; but it was not long before Peter, who then had been as an angel strengthening his Master, became an enemy and a stumbling-block and an instrument in the hands of the spirit of evil. Christ stood alone in His conception of Himself and of the nature of the kingdom of which He was to be the founder. Carlyle remarks on the boundless gratitude of Mahomet to his wife Kadijah, who had faith in the reality of the great conviction which had seized him when no one else believed in him : “Of all the kindness she had done him, this,” he writes, “of believing the

earnest, struggling word he now spoke was the greatest." In the whole world he had then but one friend, as Mahomet himself bore witness, and she was that friend. And Carlyle quotes a saying of Novalis, that a man's conviction grows infinitely the moment another soul will believe in it. Christ had no friend in the sense in which the wife of Mahomet proved herself to be his friend. His conviction owed nothing to the belief that any other soul had in it. Up to the very eve of His betrayal His own disciples did not understand what He was in the world to do. He had been long with them, but it was with all as with Philip. They had not yet known Him. But His own faith in Himself never failed. He might seem to meet with ill-success. He might be bitterly opposed by those He came to help. He might be suspected, misunderstood, maligned. He might be a stranger to them of His own household. All these things might happen and did happen. But His confidence would not be discouraged. He looked not for immediate and visible results. He listened not to the slanders of enemies or the protestations of friends. There was another voice which He heard, and He obeyed it, even unto death; and when all seemed to be lost He could yet declare that the work was finished which His Father had given Him to do. He believed in His mission. He believed in Himself as the Son of Man, whose work was the redemption of the world, through the sacrifice of the cross. The spirit that was in Him was the spirit of faith.

I observe next, *that it was the spirit of consecration.* He gave Himself up wholly to God. He gave Himself away, without condition or reserve, for the benefit of His brethren. He made a solemn and glad offering of Himself. It could scarcely have been otherwise with the faith which He had,—the faith which, according to the definition in the Epistle to the Hebrews, was the realization of unseen things. Such faith carries with it consecration—may almost be said to be another name for it. For the man who sees a heavenly vision will always be constrained to cry,—“What wilt Thou have me to do?” The service is often divided, because the spiritual perceptions are so dim. Let them become clear and bright, and the world and self will be forgotten, and the devotion of the soul to the service of heaven a necessity of its nature. It was to be expected, therefore, that Jesus, realising God, and apprehending the nature of God as He did, should consecrate Himself to the performance of His will. What other course was possible to Him? What other life could He live—to whom the Eternal Father was so real and so near—but the dedicated life? We should expect to find that this

was the life of Jesus. And we do find it. "When He cometh into the world, He saith, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." That was the purpose, the meaning, the business of His life. He came not to please Himself; He came not to please the world; He came not to accomplish any plan of His own; He came not to win any earthly crown; He came to do the will of God. His life from the beginning was a holy and perfect surrender, which culminated in the sacrifice of the cross. He was willing to do anything—He was willing to endure anything. He was willing to be like the corn of wheat which is cast into the ground and dies. He was willing to drink the cup of unspeakable anguish, if it were His Father's will, and for the redemption of mankind. The spirit of Jesus was the spirit of consecration.

And, once more, *it was the spirit of love*. And this, also, was inevitable—His faith in God and man being what it was. For who could apprehend the Father, as He did, and not love Him, who had a heart to love at all? And who could believe in the capabilities of men, His brethren, as He did—who could understand what they were meant to be, and might yet become—and not love them? To know God, as Jesus knew Him, is to love Him; and to know man, as Jesus knew him, is to love him.

There is not much that one would venture to say on a subject so sacred as the love of Christ for His Father. He speaks little of it Himself; but it breathes through all His teaching, and here and there it declares itself,—as when, for instance, He says, anticipating His coming desertion, "Nevertheless, I am not alone, for the Father is with me." Or, as when He says, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" How the heart of the Son, beloved and loving, utters itself in that cry! Or, as when He says to the disciples, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I said, I go to the Father." Or, once more, as when He says, more explicitly, as He awaits the great sacrifice, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

And of His love to man—that needs no demonstration. The Apostles speak for us here in language far more expressive, and moving, than any we can command. "Ye know," says one, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich." "Who His own self," writes another, "bare our sins in His own body on the tree." "Hereby know we love," says a third, "because He laid down His life for us." It is the same story with each of them. This is what they all see in Christ—

love which flows on for ever and will not be stayed—love for the unlovely and the unloving—love that can forgive any injury, that can agree to any sacrifice, that is proof against any discouragement—love, that will clasp the whole world to its embrace, and weep away its sorrows—love, that washes away the stains of sin against itself in the precious blood it has been willing to shed—love, immortal, unfathomable, unspeakable, the depth of which cannot be reached, the height of which cannot be scaled, the length and the breadth of which cannot be measured—love, which passeth knowledge. St. Paul, when he gave to the Corinthians and to the world that exquisite picture of charity, was not drawing from imagination, but from the life. He was speaking of that which He had seen. He was portraying Christ, as Christ had revealed Himself to him—“Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things.” Where had He seen such a grace as this! He had seen it in Christ. It was this mind that was in the Master. The spirit of Jesus was the spirit of charity—of love to God and to man.

Faith, consecration, love—these were conspicuous elements in the character of Jesus. It would be a presumptuous and vain endeavour to attempt to give a full account of the mind that was in Him. The study of that mind is an inexhaustible study. And, rather than pursue it further on this occasion, I prefer to revert to the point with which we started, and, in the light of the brief survey we have taken, to re-state the proposition to which, in theory, we are all agreed—that what concerns us far more deeply and vitally than the name by which we are known, or the position we occupy, or the opinions we hold, or the work we are engaged in, or the methods by which it is carried on, is the measure in which we, the servants, are sharing in the spirit of our Master.

Are there not many enquiries suggested to us by our consideration of the spirit by which He was animated? I propose to indicate some of these, and trust that we shall not be unwilling to face them in a serious and candid spirit.

He had the faith which realises the unseen. How far is evidence to be met with of a like spirit of faith in our churches and ourselves? What capacity have we for endurance because we see Him who is invisible? What power to despise the sorrow or the shame of the present because of

the joy that is set before us? There is no need to quarrel with our creeds. It is likely enough that little is lacking in our professions. There are many exalted and glorious truths that we are understood to believe. But that is not the question. The question is whether we really do believe as our Master did—whether God and goodness and heaven and the eternal future are real to us as they were to Him—more real and of infinitely greater importance and worth, as they must be if there is any reality in them at all, than the fleeting and unsubstantial shadows of the present? That is the question; and it must not be met with an affirmative too hastily. It has been pondered by some men of our own time, not wanting in clearness of discernment, with many misgivings. “There is a mode of speech about religion,” writes Dr. Martineau, “which is every year becoming more familiar, and separating us further from the simple fervour of an earnest and prophetic age. I refer to the disposition to look at faith instead of living in it; to own it as a noble fact in human nature without becoming personally committed to it; to feel interested in its representation, but evade contact with its realities. There is no more favourite object of criticism than its different forms; the origin of each peculiar worship, the meaning of its symbols, the character of its doctrines, are a topic no longer special to the divine, but familiar even to the newspaper. Yet the great objects of trust seem none the nearer for all this; they lie off at second-hand; and men discuss with the lips each other’s creeds instead of going into silence with their own God. The pure and simple faith of the elder time has passed away.” So writes one of the shrewdest observers of our own generation. And another eminent man, whom we claim as one of ourselves, Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, has borne a similar witness in language which, at the time it was uttered, evoked some criticism. “God Himself,” he says, “is passing out of our life. In every direction I see the signs that we are living without God—in the Church as well as in the world. We have made ourselves the centre of our religious thought. We are conscious that we ourselves are alive; but He has ceased to be the living God, with an infinite fervour of joy in righteousness, which is obedience to His will, and an infinite fervour of hatred to sin, which is the transgression of His commandments.” This is what Dr. Dale thinks to be the tendency of our modern religious life. And who among us has never felt what he has so forcibly expressed? Who has never been inclined to ask at our religious gatherings, as he has listened to the words that have been spoken and the prayers that have been offered, What intensity of faith lies here behind these forms and

phrases? What apprehension have these persons of the solemn and glorious meaning that ought to belong to this service? What deep, subduing, inspiring sense of God is present in this assembly? That has been said which scarcely could have been said if there had been any vivid conviction that God was listening. That has been done, the very thought of which would have been impossible if the house had seemed to be filled with His glory. Has not that been your feeling? Yes! and you have gone out in the darkness, acknowledging to yourself that there was more of God in the stillness of the night, amid the open fields, or by the solitary shore, than in the assembly where His servants were gathered together for the promotion of His glory.

It is this—do not our hearts confess it?—that we need the most—not better buildings, or better methods, or better machinery of any kind, but a profounder sense of the reality of the living God. The eye which can behold Him everywhere, the ear which is quick to listen to the whispers of His voice, the heart which trembles with inexpressible delight as it owns His presence and rests in His love, the soul which is awake, and, having learned for what it was born and what its destiny is to be, lives, and breathes, and moves exultant, in the free air and amid the sunny splendours of the wide spaces of God's invisible kingdom! These, these, are the great necessities. Money is good, and organisation is good, and outward forms of order and beauty are good; but better than all, incomparably better and more to be desired, is this holy faith which, amid all the darkness and sorrow of the world, is beholding ever the Beatific Vision, and hearing the harmonies of heaven.

Nor should it be a matter of indifference with the disciple, whether he has, or has not, a faith such as his Master had in man and in himself. We need to believe in human nature as much as we need to believe in God, if we would do our work, as Christian men, with much heart and hope. Not, indeed, in human nature as it is, or as it appears. To believe in what is visible and patent is not faith at all. But to believe in human nature as it is capable of development or of regeneration under the Divine influences, to believe in man and the possibilities of greatness which lie folded within him, so to believe is to be like-minded with Christ. The cynic who has come to the conclusion that man is an ignoble creature, and that he is incapable of anything that is truly admirable and great, may be very wise; but his is not the wisdom that cometh from above, and, indeed, it is not wisdom at all. If he were wise he would be wiser than his Master, for Christ never made the discovery that there is

no man anywhere who can be trusted. But the truth is, the shrewd and clever cynic does not look deep enough nor far on enough. He judges by appearances, and his criticism is the ignorant, blundering criticism of one who deals with that which is scarcely yet in bud, as though it professed to be the perfect and consummate flower. But it is not only in the view we take of human nature in general that we do well to cultivate the spirit of faith and hope. In our relations, not with man, but with men, the individual men with whom we have to do in the business and intercourse of our life, in the manner of our dealings with them, in the things that we say of them, in the thoughts that we think of them, in the spirit that we cherish towards them, it is of equal importance, or perhaps of even greater importance, that the principle by which we are governed should be the principle, not of trust and suspicion, but of generous and unhesitating faith. Let us believe, I would say, if I might plead with my brethren and companions in Christian work—let us believe in one another. Let us believe, and that with all our hearts, in each other's integrity, honour, virtue. Let us doubt the doubts that may suggest themselves to our minds, and drive away the suspicions, that creep in unawares, with indignation and wrath. It is an unlovely, it is a hateful thing, when men are swift to believe the worst of their fellows, and slow to recognise the noble elements that are in them. Who am I that I should suppose that no one can be sincere—that no one can be conscientious—that no one can be concerned for the good of the world—but myself? No,—if we cannot trust each other, let us not pretend to any Christian fellowship at all. If we are to keep watch and ward over one another, as though our very kindred in Christ were devising mischief against us, then let us break up our religious societies and live each one apart. For without mutual faith there will never be any fellowship that is worthy of the name.

And, after Christ's manner also, it were well if we could put a little more faith even in those who may seem to have forfeited our confidence, or never to have deserved it. "It is only a noble nature," it may be said, "that will respond to a generous trust—that will not abuse and betray it." Possibly; but are we too audacious if we cherish the hope that there is no nature, however fallen and degraded and defiled, that is altogether and absolutely ignoble? Of this, at least, we may be well assured, that the way to ennoble men, or to develope what germ of good may be in them, is not to suspect but to trust. Suspicion is the sharp east wind that withers the yet unopened bud. Trust is the genial sunshine under the warm influence of which it will expand into a flower. Trusting men, even those

whose characters are more than dubious, does not always damage them so much as we may fancy ; and sometimes it is the only chance of their redemption. It lifts them up. It sets them upon their feet. It makes men of them. It opens for them the gate to the kingdom of God.

And, also, I would say, let us believe in ourselves ; not in ourselves apart from God, but in ourselves as the servants and messengers of God. Why should He not speak to us also, as to others ? Why should He not give, even to us, work to do, and the power to do it ? Why should we not have our appointed mission to fulfil in this sorrowful and restless world ? There is a self-confidence which is an indication of weakness and a prophecy of failure ; but there is also a self-confidence which is both just and necessary. And we may be certain that if a man will not believe in his own instincts, his own conscience, his own judgment, his own capacity, his own place and mission in the world, he is not a man of whom anything great is to be expected.

I have now a word to say on the spirit of consecration, as the spirit by the cultivation of which we follow in our Master's steps. We know well what it means. It is the spirit of which the cross of Jesus is the outward and visible sign. It is the spirit which, as it reveals itself in us, will say, not "I come to secure so much good for myself as I can"—not "I come to climb the heights of fame till I reach the highest point that is attainable"—not "I come to court success, or to be admired, or to live in ease, or to secure my own way"—but "I come to do Thy will, O God." Is this too much to demand of us ? Is God in Christ an object unworthy of such unreserved and solemn dedication of ourselves ? Shall men around us become wholly absorbed in scientific research, or devotees of art, or ardent and whole-hearted students of politics, of literature, of history, or worshippers of wealth or fashion, or enthusiasts in sport ? Shall money-getting, or fox-hunting be a passion with men, and shall we who have looked into the face of Christ and seen in it the light of the knowledge of the glory of God—we who have eaten the bread and drunk the wine which speak of the Body broken for the world, and the precious Blood which flowed so freely for the world's salvation—we who have taken up our station within the solemn shadow of the cross—we who have learnt from the Holy Lips the meaning of duty, the woe and peril and shame of sin, the beauty of holiness, the glory of heaven—we who dwell in the light of this great revelation, while around us we behold the misery of mankind—shall we think it too much to ask that we should give ourselves freely and wholly away for God and for man ? Is not the

cause one that is worthy to occupy our noblest powers? Is not the end one that claims to be pursued with undivided zeal? There are those who labour with us in the same cause, who consecrate themselves to the service with a simplicity and freedom which we cannot fail to recognise and ought not to be slow to honour. We differ widely from the Anglican clergy in many of the views which they hold; but there are not a few connected with the most advanced school in the Established Church whose absolute self-forgetfulness and high-minded devotion to their work we should be churls indeed if we did not freely acknowledge. We look with critical and, sometimes it may be, with unfriendly eyes upon the proceedings of the "Salvation Army"; but a recent writer who has given an account in one of our popular magazines of a visit to the Training Home of the "Army" at Clapton, and whose approval of all she saw and heard is not by any means unqualified, has yet borne witness that the spirit of entire self-abnegation is manifest throughout the whole establishment, and that each soldier throws all his heart and soul into the war, determining to make each struggle a victory. I pray heaven it may not be brought as a reproach against us, that while others around us are animated by the true spirit of Christian chivalry, the sacred fire is burning low and dim in our hearts, and that we are thinking of ourselves, our comfort, our popularity, our chances of promotion, as well, or as much, as of the honour of Christ's Name and the interests of His Kingdom.

One more enquiry I will venture to suggest. It is the enquiry whether, amid all our schemes for the extension of our work, and the improvement of our methods, there may not yet be room and need for a still brighter and fuller manifestation of that spirit of love which was associated, in the character of Jesus, with the faith that enjoyed the vision of God, and the consecration that made the Father's will the supreme law of life. I do not speak of the love which is but an indolent, effusive sentiment, wasting itself in emotional indulgence, or finding an easy and cheap expression in the affectionate manner, or the fond and flattering speech; but of the love of which the noblest manhood need not be ashamed,—the love which towards God, is a sacred fire which burns on for ever, intense and clear, in the sanctuary of the soul,—a pure and adoring affection for One who has been good to us beyond all our power to describe,—and which towards man is no affair of neat compliments or pretty speeches, but a yearning pity, a clinging fellowship, or a reverent wonder, and in any case a fervent, a patient, and an invincible goodwill.

With all our needs what is there that we may more fitly pray for than

this—that we may have a more adoring reverence towards God, and a more tender charity towards each other, and towards all men ?

There are those who belong to our own company, brothers in the ministry, or in the membership of our Churches. We owe them our love—the love which means respect, sympathy, service—the love which will care for their honour, their success, and their joy as for our own. There are those who represent a church which enjoys the patronage of the state, and is wealthier and more in fashion than the communities which exist among ourselves. I know that the attitude which is sometimes assumed by the clergy towards us and our work is such as to impose a heavy tax upon the fund of goodwill and charity which we have at command ; and if I were speaking as a Churchman to Churchmen I would ask, with all deference but with much urgency, whether there is not a more excellent way and a more Christian attitude. But, speaking as a Nonconformist to Nonconformists, I choose to say this rather—that here also is a debt of love which must honestly be paid. If we love only them that love us what thank have we ? For my part, as I hope in the forgiveness and the patience of Christ, whom I have not always used well or treated with the respect which is His due, so I would strive not to allow my love to be overcome by the opposition, or the ill-will, or even the contempt of those who may treat me with less consideration and sympathy than I think I deserve. And, finally, there are the men and women around us of every sort and condition. To them, also, the sacred debt is due. Do we say of them, or of many of them, that they are not easy to love ? That they are rough in manner, vulgar, arrogant, vain, dull in intelligence, narrow in their sympathies, selfish, hard, ungenerous, without nobility of spirit, capable of what is dishonourable and mean ? It may all be true. It may be true that it is not easy to love them. But that is only another way of saying that it is not easy to have the mind in us which was in our Master. And, certainly, that is not easy. But it is the thing to be aimed at. It is the crown of life. It is the prize of our high calling. And the more we are in the company of Christ, and the better we understand His nature, the more possible it will be for us to learn the hard lesson ; and for His sake, and because of what they are to Him, and of what He sees in them, in spite of all their faults, to love with a love full of pity and of gentleness the men and women upon whom He has compassion still, and for whom He died, and to whom He is ever, no matter how low they may have fallen, their most merciful and never-failing Redeemer and Friend and Brother who is in heaven.

Reviews.

ZOOLOGICAL PHOTOGRAPHS. By JOSEPH HASSELL, A.K.C.

THE BIBLICAL TREASURY.

A PRIMER OF BIBLE GEOGRAPHY. By G. R. CONDER, R.E.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL HYMN BOOK, WITH TUNES.

THE BLACKBOARD IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL. By B. CLARK and F. BEARD.

THE PENTATEUCH. By JOHN KENNEDY, M.A., D.D. London : Sunday School Union, 56, Old Bailey.

Zoological Photographs. "The study of Nature," says the Author, "is both interesting and useful." Of all branches of Natural History that of Zoology is one of the most important. In every animal, from the tiny gnat to the gigantic whale, and from the lowly worm to man himself, is found those adaptations of instincts and habits which are in themselves undeniable evidence of a presiding mind—an intelligence which we call God." This is true. We know of no book so suited to interest and instruct the young on this important branch of study as the one before us. This valuable little work consists of sixteen chapters on such subjects as, "The History of a Sponge—A Journey in Dreamland among the Jelly Fishes—The History of Red Coral—Star Fishes—Underdone Pork, or the Story of the Tape Worms—Early Birds catch the Worms—The Lobster Pots—The Invitation of the Spider—The Autobiography of a Fly—Are there any Baby Butterflies?—The Story of a Silk Handkerchief—Bread and Honey," &c.

The Biblical Treasury. The information contained in this book has much to charm, and not a little to instruct. It is selected from various sources, some of more authority than others. On no portion of the Bible has so much light been thrown as on that connected with Egypt and the sojourn of the Hebrews there and their exodus therefrom. This work will have, no doubt, what it deserves—an extensive circulation.

A Primer of Bible Geography. This Geography is founded on the latest explorations. The intention is to help Sunday School Teachers, and it is in every way suited for the purpose.

The Sunday School Hymn Book. We are informed in the Introduction that "it has been the aim of the Committee of the Sunday School Union to prepare a selection of Hymns and Tunes sufficiently full, varied, and attractive to supply all the ordinary requirements of the Sunday School Service of Song." There are many capital hymns in this book. Some, however, are of questionable value, and some are very objectionable on theological, poetical, and literary grounds. To us it is positively shocking to invite children to sing some of the compositions here.

The Blackboard in the Sunday School. We are told in the preface that "the object of this useful little book is to popularise the blackboard as an adjunct to all Sunday Schools." Lessons of varied kinds are appended here suitable for the desk, class, and separate services.

The Pentateuch. Whilst some will consider this little volume of questionable worth on account of its assumptions, few can read it thoughtfully without profit and interest.

DICTIONARY OF PHRASE AND FABLE. By E. COBHAM BREWER, LL.D.
London : Cassell, Petter & Co., Ludgate Hill.

This book gives the derivation, source, or origin, of common phrases, allusions, and words that have a tale to tell ; also a concise Bibliography of English Literature. This being the sixteenth edition of this work, revised and corrected, it is fair to suppose that its literary features and merits are tolerably well known. Its Etymological Section is very interesting, also enlightening and suggestive. As an instance, take the word "abandon," which means desert your colours ; "Church" means a circle, and not God's house, as is usually given ; "prevaricate" is to go zig-zag, or plough a crooked furrow ; "scrupulous" is to get a stone in your shoe ; "Sir" is cousin-Germain to the Greek anax, a king ; "head" to the Greek Kephale ; "wig" to the Latin pilucca ; "tear," and the French larme are mere varieties of the Greek dakru. "A large number of such word-studies have been admitted as walnuts for after dinner. Many others will serve to show how strangely even wise men will sometimes err when they wander in dreamland. Witness the etymology given by Dr. Ash of the word 'curmudgeon,' Crabbe's etymology of the word 'doze,' Isidore's derivation of the word 'stipulate,' Blackstone's deduction of 'parson' from persona, Pliny's 'druid,' from drus, an oak, Scaliger's etymology of 'satire,' &c. Pleasant fables these which have a right to stand in the museum of odds and ends." The following extract from the Preface will put our readers in possession of the general character of this work :—"This Dictionary is a Directory not so perfect as that of the Post Office, yet sufficiently so, we hope, to give the local habitation of the most characteristic expressions. In a word, from a mass of material in MS., fully thrice the size of the present volume, we have selected some 20,000 examples of what we have thought to be the best suited for popular purposes. Much has been culled of necessity from the thousand and one sources of such lore in English, German, or French, and more is entirely new. We cannot even hope that all our explanations will pass

the ordeal of critics unscathed. The labour has been the willing labour of an enthusiast, who has been for twenty years a 'snapper up of unconsidered trifles.' This book is a valuable work of reference which those engaged in literary work and others will find of great service.

POEMS, SKETCHES, AND ESSAYS. By JANET HAMILTON. Glasgow : James Maclehose and Sons.

Genius is independent of wealth and rank ; in truth it seems, on the whole, to shun rather than court lofty titles and "noble blood." What are the titled and gorgeously-attired ladies belonging to what is called "society," compared to the grand old Scotch peasant whose portrait and mental effusions are contained in this volume ? The grand ladies would not touch her withered old fingers, albeit, as compared to them, she seems to me a queen. What is fashionable ladyhood compared to intellectual womanhood ? A flashing meteor to a fixed star, shedding light on many zones and eons. The late George Gilfillan, who moved as a giant amid the pulpiteering dwarfs of his age, furnishes a graphic biographic sketch of the old woman whose thoughts are here reprinted in verse and prose. In the following stanzas we have at once an insight into her domestic lowliness and mental aspirations.—


" We are lowly, very lowly,
 Low the bard, and low the song,
 Lowly thou, my own dear village,
 Lowly those I dwell among.
 From my lowly home of childhood,
 Low sweet voices fill my ears,
 Till my drooping lids grow weary
 With the weight of tender tears.
 Low in station, low in labour,
 Low in all that worldlings prize,
 Till the voice says, "Come up hither,"
 To a mansion in the skies.
 Yet not lowly aspirations,
 High and strong my soul's desire
 To assist my toiling brothers
 Upward, onward to aspire.
 Upward to the heaven above us,
 Onward to the march of mind,
 Upward to the shrine of freedom,
 Onward, working for our kind.
 This to you, my working brothers,
 I inscribe, may nothing low
 Dwell in mind, in heart, or habit,
 Upward look, and onward go."



The
Leading Homily.

THE TRUE TANGIBILITY OF CHRIST

“JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, TOUCH ME NOT: FOR I AM NOT YET
ASCENDED TO MY FATHER.”—*John* xx. 17.

O spake the risen Lord to Mary Magdalene, hard by the sepulchre where so recently His lifeless body had been laid. At first when she saw Him she knew Him not. “Her tears wove a veil” that concealed His identity, and when He accosted her, grief seems to have dulled her very hearing, for she recognised not the intonation of His voice. But now that He says “Mary,” with the old accent, the recognition is instantaneous and complete. Turning, she cries “Rabboni,” and, apparently, falling down in adoration, would have clasped Him by the feet; but He says, “Touch Me not: for I am not yet ascended to My Father.”

Why this prohibition? He permitted other women (Matt. xxviii. 9) to clasp Him by the feet; He afterwards invited Thomas to touch Him (v. 27), “Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side.” Why should He refuse to permit Mary Magdalene to

touch Him? Many and curious have been the replies; but merely to enumerate such as seem untenable would be profitless, if amusing. It may, however, be well to express dissent from that mode of solving the riddle which some have adopted by proffering a new translation. To render the word *ἅπτω*, which, wherever it occurs in the New Testament (as it does thirty-six times), is properly translated by the word "touch," by the expression "lay hold of" or "retain," in this one place, certainly does not commend itself as a fair solution of the difficulty. Probably we shall the better understand the prohibition of our text if we bear in mind Christ's habit of dealing differently with each soul according to its individual peculiarity and need. It seems likely that one reason why the Saviour forbade Mary Magdalene to touch Him was because, *by so doing, her faith would be rather hindered than helped*. Of Mary Magdalene we read first in Luke viii. 2, where mention is made of her having been cured by Christ of "possession." Such affliction sometimes followed marked moral depravity, and is supposed to have done so in this case by those who recognise in the nameless "sinner" of the previous chapter, who in the house of Simon the Pharisee, with strong impulse of penitence, gratitude, and trust, washed the feet of Jesus, as He reclined at the feast, with her copious tears and wiped them with her disheveled tresses—this same Mary Magdalene. In any case she seems to have been a woman whose natural temperament disposed her to place undue reliance on the evidence that came through the senses, to value too highly the seen and temporal, to appreciate too little the not seen and eternal. John went into the empty sepulchre "and saw"—saw the vacancy "and believed"—believed that Christ had fulfilled His own prediction and risen from the dead, Mary Magdalene went in and the same spectacle of absent body and carefully arranged cerements only led her to exclaim, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Now that she has recognised Christ she would grasp Him, not as Thomas did, in order to dispel unbelief, but to retain Him as her visible Redeemer. But Christ's reappearances and disappearances throughout the forty days prior to His ascension, were meant not

only to assure of His resurrection, but to wean the disciples from that dependence on a physical presence, which for their sakes it was expedient He should withdraw. And because this dependence was more pronounced in Mary Magdalene than in the other disciples, He at once informs her that He must shortly quit the earth, and the sooner to evoke her faith in an unseen Saviour, He disallows the touch that would intensify the desire, if not the hope, of a resumption of the former material conditions of acquaintanceship.

Perhaps we can derive no more consolatory reflection from this specific treatment of Mary Magdalene than the assurance that alike by His providence and grace Christ pays to each of His disciples a special regard. We should think but little of the medical man who treated all patients suffering from a similar disease precisely alike, regardless of individual constitution, of age, of circumstances, and of possibly concomitant ailments; and we may be quite sure that the Great Physician adapts His treatment to the personal peculiarities and necessities of each of His patients.

Hence, when perplexed as we behold among the children of God so great variety of temporal circumstance, social position, physical vigour, and even, what we may deem, spiritual privileges, instead of harbouring doubt, or preferring complaint, we must look for that growth in spiritual vigour which will certainly come to us through the remedial agencies and beneficial deprivations that Christ Himself has prescribed. The adoring grasp which to Mary Magdalene might have appeared likely to prove a means of grace, was seen by Jesus to be calculated rather to hinder than to help her faith, hence His prohibition.

This seems further made plain by the language which follows, wherein Christ *directs her and our attention to a truer touch within reach of us all and for ever*. "FOR I am not yet ascended to My Father." Then, when I am ascended, you may touch Me, you may clasp Me, you may possess Me more truly than is possible now and here. The body of our Lord's humanity was a veil, which whilst it permitted much of the glory of God to pass through its meshes, concealed more. Drawing attention first to

itself and then to the Divine that glowed behind it, it had to be ultimately withdrawn that the true splendour might be more clearly discerned. Not till Christ had died, and risen again, and ascended on high, and descended in His spiritual presence, did the disciples understand the true meaning of the words, "I and My Father are one"; "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you"; and "ye know Him (the Comforter) for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." So separation was essential to true intimacy, departure to apprehension, forth-going to spiritual indwelling.

Our own lives furnish illustrations of such seeming paradox. When one who from infancy has dwelt beneath our roof goes forth from us, looking at the life as a whole, regarding the characteristics of such dear departed one, we often get a truer knowledge of him or her than we possessed in those former days when the presence was habitual. Aye, and separation results often in completer intercourse. The child at a distance will often write words of deep heart experience which it would never have uttered amidst the ordinary flow of domestic routine and converse. Aye, and often the farther the removal the fuller the outpouring of the heart. The letters which, at considerable intervals, cross the ocean, will often contain a more real transcript of the soul than the hasty missives which our penny post tends to make so trivial and curt. And how does this apply to the separation that death enforces? Truly we seem to know them better with whom we shall not speak again on earth, than we did before the hour of their utter silence. And, mayhap, they know us better. But as to intercourse? They living, active, remembering, may surely be numbered amongst those ministering spirits who are the channels of Divine thought and impulse to our minds and hearts. And, for our part, we remember the poet's words which he spake of his sainted daughter.

"Thus do we walk with her and keep unbroken
The bonds which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, tho' unspoken,
May reach her where she lives."

Some of us are more confident than this, and make no doubt that when our hearts go forth in full floods of affection toward our loved with Christ, the ripples reach the strand on which they wander, waiting yet rejoicing.

But as regards intercourse with the unseen Saviour, no Christian can be in doubt. We speak with Him in prayer, He answers by His spirit; by faith we place our hand in His, saying—

“Jesus still lead on
Till our rest be won.”

And we are assured of His guidance, and spiritually conscious of the pressure of that hand, and of the impartation of that Divine force which shall sustain us to the end.

This is the true touch to which we are all invited.

WORCESTER.

SEPTIMUS MARCH, B.A.

THE INFLUENCE OF A GOOD MAN.—“The only specific I can now think of for a village, or any other place, is a good and true man, doing his utmost and sacrificing himself for the people, bold and resolute enough to say and do the right thing under all circumstances, and sticking well to his post. This I am sure will be always fairly successful, and without it no system, no laws, no institutions will; I will add no churches, no services, no creeds, no schools will. It may be the squire, it may be the parson, it may be some conscientious and pious dissenter who is the salt of the little world and the leaven of the human lump; but if there be not someone there going about in the image of God that made him, and standing in the midst between these people and heaven above, they will assuredly go to the bad, in spite of all that laws and civilization can do for them.”—T. MOZELEY.

Germs of Thought.

God's Day School.

"MORNING BY MORNING HE OPENETH MINE EAR TO HEAR AS
THE SCHOLARS."—*Isaiah* 1. 4.

THESE words are from that noble and beautiful part of Holy Scripture which draws the portrait of the "*servant of Jehovah*." If we ask anew the old question, "*Of whom speaketh the prophet this?*" we can find the full and perfect answer only if we speak of "*Jesus*." Only in Him who is both Son and Servant can we find the true original. Yet if we read these twenty-six chapters as a whole (and only so can we understand what we read), we find that some of the elements of description fall below what we believe of Messiah, while other elements rise above what we see in "*the prophet himself*," or in God's servant Israel.

Isaiah, indeed, sees but "*in a glass darkly*," and the image which meets his eye therein is sometimes that of the type and sometimes that of the anti-type. It used to be said that there is a "double sense" in prophecy; perhaps we should rather say a double fulfilment, and sometimes many fulfilments. The primary application of the whole description, as interpreted for us within it, is to God's chosen people Israel. This is that Servant of Jehovah whom He upheld, His elect in whom His soul delighted, upon whom His spirit was put that He might bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. This is that tender plant out of the dry ground of humanity, despised and rejected by an idolatrous world, yet bearing griefs and sorrows for the world's sake and for the world's benefit, unto whom, in the midst of the gross darkness covering the people, the light of God was to come and attract to its glorious ray the wondering nations. In this sense, too, the great description has its application to servants of God in all ages, so far as they are light-receivers and light-bearers.

But all such dim realizations of the lofty ideal point on to Him who realized it fully, of whom the earliest disciples, in distinct reference to this prophecy, delighted to speak as God's "*holy Servant, Jesus*" (Acts iv. 27, 30).

If we would rightly understand this Divine application of Isaiah's words, we must first understand the human application of them, looking through the type to the anti-type, and thus beholding the Servant of Jehovah as "*blind*" and "*deaf*," yet "*well-pleasing*" to God as one "*magnifying the law and making it honourable*," and both shadowing forth and preparing the way for the perfect service of the perfect Servant. Taking first then this human view of the text, observe:—

I.—THE CLOSED EARS OF GOD'S SCHOLARS. "*He openeth mine ear.*" It is closed then, all too closed to the Divine voice. In the earlier description of Israel, associated with Isaiah's call to the prophetic office (a passage more frequently quoted in the New Testament than any other words of the Old), the ear is said to be "*heavy*," and the heart "*gross*," and the eyes "*closed*." Alas, this is the sorrowful condition not only of Israel but of humanity. Man is deaf to God; deaf because he will be deaf, as the "*deaf adder stoppeth her ear to the voice of the charmer*." Argument, expostulation, appeal, fall in vain on the closed ear. Nor is it in our poor music, but in the human ear that the cause of failure lies. Even the Divine voice calls sometimes in vain; not only do we sadly cry, "*Who hath believed OUR report?*" but also "*To whom is THE ARM OF THE LORD revealed?*" But see next—

II.—THE CLOSED EARS DIVINELY OPENED. "*He openeth.*" The ear is too heavy for the word itself to penetrate till He who breathed it comes. By Him it is opened, at a time of spiritual crisis oftentimes, but even then the scholar of God is too often deaf to his Teacher's voice. His ears need to be often opened anew. "*Morning by morning He openeth Mine ear.*" We must all be day scholars in the school of God. If we learn not His lessons daily we shall learn them ill. And we learn "*as the scholars*." The double meaning of this word "*scholar*" suits the meaning of the passage admirably. A "*scholar*" is one who is learning his alphabet, and a "*scholar*" is also one that knows

much more than his fellow-men, and can teach them with the "*tongue of the scholar.*" But there must be learning before teaching, and if we are scholars in God's school we shall know "*more than the ancients.*" What then are His lessons?

(1) The first lesson God teaches is A LESSON IN OBEDIENCE. "*The Lord God hath opened Mine ear and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.*" The first voice that falls upon the opened ear is a voice of *command*,—awake, arise, act. "*To obey is better than sacrifice.*" Obedience is the way of life, into which if we would enter we must "*keep the commandments.*" This, in the deepest sense, is the language of the Gospel, not of the law only; for the Gospel is not a royal road to life in which obedience is less necessary or important than it was before, but the way to the highest obedience. The best external righteousness is but a step towards an inwrought righteousness, nor could it possibly be an advantage to us to have even a Divine righteousness put upon us if it were never to be put within us. On the newly opened ear, then, falls the voice of command, and obedience is the first lesson: "*Who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me!*"

(2) The second lesson God teaches is A LESSON IN PATIENCE. "*I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.*" Morning by morning the Divine voice calls us to suffer as well as to do. The servant of God awakes to find the world against him, and that to obey God he must incur the displeasure of men. So in all ages the true servants of God have been smitten and insulted and reproached, and have had to learn to add patience to their faith. In whatever higher or lower path our place of service may be, we shall have to learn to endure, and only through patience shall we possess our souls. "*It is sufficient for the disciple to be as his Master.*"

(3) The third lesson God teaches is A LESSON IN BOLDNESS. "*For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth Me; who will contend with Me?*" Flint-like are the true scholars of God.

The secret of their boldness is an open secret. Omnipotence is on their side, and they know it. Enemies there are many, but they fear them not. "*He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee ; therefore we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me.*" How beautifully has St. Paul echoed Isaiah's thought, (Romans viiii. 33) "*It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ?*"

(4) The fourth lesson God teaches is A LESSON IN SERVICE. "*The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of a scholar, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.*" The ear is opened that the tongue may be loosed to speak for Him who opened it. Every scholar must be a teacher. He who is deaf cannot but be dumb, but when the deafness is gone speech returns, or should return. Nor are many words needed. "*A word in season, how good it is.*" How many weary hearts are there in the world. For such there is a word always "*in season.*" It is the word that says, "TRUST" (verse 10). How beautifully Isaiah draws for us the two contrasted pictures of those who trust and those who trust not, when both "*walk in darkness and have no light.*" The latter try to "*walk in the light of the sparks that they have themselves kindled,*" but they cannot find the way, and, in the end, have to "*lie down in sorrow.*" The former "*trust*" and "*stay upon their God,*" and, thus leaning on Him, can go on, though light for a time be denied. This is Isaiah's "*word in season*" to a weary world. Rightly understood the whole Gospel is wrapped up in it—"TRUST."

Look, in conclusion, at the application of the text to Jesus Christ. Isaiah was His favourite book, and this text doubtless was often in His mind, as it was once upon His lips. His ear was never "*heavy*" with sin, yet was it opened for Him by His God and ours. "*Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not : mine ear hast Thou opened.*" From earliest childhood was it opened to the Father's voice.

Do we learn obedience ? He also "*learned obedience by the things that He suffered,*" so that it was "*His meat*" to do the will of God always, and in Him only was the ideal attitude of obedience realized. "*Lo I come : I delight to do Thy will, O my God.*"

Do we painfully learn the lesson of *patience*? Let us "*consider Him who endured the contradiction of sinners.*" Our text was in His mind when He said, "*Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on*"; and was fulfilled in Him when "*they did spit in His face and buffeted Him, and others smote Him with the palms of their hands.*"

Do we gain something of His *boldness*? It was when the persecutors of the earliest disciples marvelled at boldness which they showed that "*they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus,*" for at His feet they had learned this manly virtue.

Do we attempt *service*? How did God's holy servant fulfil His consoling mission by speaking words in season to the weary. And the old lesson is also the new, "*Have faith in God.*" The "*faith*" of the New Testament is the "*trust*" of the Old. The Gospel calls us to the same trust of which Isaiah speaks, but with a more certain sound and with far ampler showing of the ground on which our trust may rest for ever, as it sweetly invites us by the memory of the Cross of Jesus and of the glory into which He is gone, with a word never out of season in this weary world,—"*Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*"

BRISTOL.

H. C. LEONARD, M.A.

Zacchæus.

"AND WHEN JESUS CAME TO THE PLACE, HE LOOKED UP, AND SAW HIM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, ZACCHÆUS, MAKE HASTE, AND COME DOWN; FOR TO-DAY I MUST ABIDE AT THY HOUSE."—*Luke* xix. 5.

JESUS was passing through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. Apparently He had never been there before; certainly He never went there again. But the visit was a memorable one, for here and then Bartimæus was restored to sight, and Zacchæus to the home and heart of God.

Zacchæus is introduced to us as the chief among the publicans, and rich. The common publicans were usually poor men of broken fortunes; but he may have been a kind of receiver-general, or may have farmed a large district, and let it out in portions to subordinate tax-gatherers. Such men had abundant opportunity of enriching themselves if they chose. But though rich he was despised. Nor is this surprising. If the Jews hated the Roman officials who demanded tribute, how much more would they abhor one of their own countrymen for collecting it.

Zacchæus wanted to see Christ. Why? He seems to have been impelled by *curiosity*. But he may also have been *yearning for peace*, which his wealth had never been able to impart.

I.—DIFFICULTIES SURMOUNTED.

(1) *The crowd*. So now, a multitude of worldly affairs,—the pressure of business, temporal anxieties, domestic cares, &c., prevent us from seeing Christ.

(2) "*He was little of stature*." A short man is at a disadvantage every way. Many people are greatly influenced by an imposing exterior. It is far worse, however, to be a dwarf in spirit. "The mind is the stature of the man." The proper standard by which to estimate a person is his moral and spiritual elevation,—his attainments in holiness, his superiority to others in piety and zeal. Our natural standpoint is not high enough to enable us to discern Christ.

Zacchæus ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree. (It was a common thing for the sycamore tree to be planted by the way-side. It struck its roots into the soil with great rapidity and at a considerable depth. It was easy to climb, and as its giant arms often stretched right across the road, it exactly suited the purpose of Zacchæus. He could see all that was going on below, and yet, screened by the foliage, hope to remain unseen.) It might amuse the thoughtless onlooker to see a little man climbing up a big tree; it might shock some people's sense of propriety; but there were many acts of Zacchæus which he had far more reason to be ashamed of. There are deeds in the lives of us all which ought to awaken far more shame than some about which we manifest hesitation or mental confusion.

God has made provision for our overcoming the difficulties which lie in our path. He has planted sycamores by the way-side of life. He has given us the means of grace,—the word of truth, the privilege of prayer, the soul-inspiring influence of vocal praise. If we availed ourselves of these opportunities more fully, we should not only see Christ, but, like Zacchæus, we should receive the pleasing invitation, “Come down, to-day I must abide at thy house.”

II.—EARNESTNESS REWARDED.

Zacchæus obtained more than he sought. He not only saw Christ, he was also seen by Christ, and asked to entertain Him. He who knows the hearts of all men must have read something in the heart of this publican which led him to single him out from all the rest as his host. Zacchæus may have been better than his position would suggest, and needed encouragement. It is easier for some to be holy than for others. They were born with gentler natures; they occupy more favourable positions; they are not assailed by strong temptations. Zacchæus, as a publican, would find it hard to be honest, even if he tried to be. When everyone looks down upon a man with suspicion, contempt, or hatred, it is not easy for him to maintain self-respect. A man with no character to support, with no encouragement to fight against his besetting sins,—doubted, disbelieved in, spurned by all, is likely to sink lower and lower.

Christ may have seen the conflict that was raging in the publican's heart. He invited Himself to his dwelling. “And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully.”

But the joy of Zacchæus was not shared by the crowd, though not one of them had offered Christ hospitality. “*They all murmured.*” There are some people who seem to regard it as their special mission in life to modify or spoil the enjoyment of others. *They said, “that He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.”* But He came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” If the physician avoided the sick because the disease was loathsome or infectious, how could they be cured?

III.—SALVATION BESTOWED.

The words of Zacchæus, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods,”

&c., were not uttered by way of ostentation. They may have been intended as a vindication of his character, or the spontaneous resolve of a grateful heart. He may be referring to his custom at that time, or, most probably, to his intentions. The presence of Christ, the sympathy of Christ, the unlooked for honour which Christ had conferred upon him, woke into life and activity all the better feelings of his nature, changed his views of the value of earthly possessions, and made him willing to give up all for so gracious a Friend. He had caught the spirit of Jesus, and showed himself fitted for the reception of pardon and acceptance with God. The bigotry of the Jews excluded him from their society; the love of Christ gave him an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Benevolence alone will not save a man, and restitution is only an act of justice, but they may be signs of a great change. And such a change Christ produces wherever He comes.

DERBY.

FRED. J. AUSTIN.

Dark Sayings on a Harp.

“I WILL INCLINE MINE EAR TO A PARABLE: I WILL OPEN MY
DARK SAYING UPON THE HARP.”—*Psalm* xlix. 4.

THIS psalm is not of temporary and local interest only, but appeals to all men in all places and times. It refers to problems that will occupy the minds of men to the end of the world. This psalm is not so much a sacred song, or prayer set to music, as a sermon, moulded in a parabolic form. There are many things in the Providence of God that have ever been a puzzle to reflective minds, such as the prosperity of the wicked, the afflictions of the righteous, &c. Many have discoursed upon these things in a peevish, petulant spirit, with sad sepulchral tones. The psalmist did not hang his harp upon the willow, and sob and wail as he uttered his dark sayings, but tuned it up to concert pitch, and

blended music with the mysteries of life. Happy man thus to interpret perplexing problems, and to translate the groans of creation, and sobs of humanity, into divine and holy melodies. Guided by my text I shall strive to set the mysteries of earth to the minstrelsy of the skies. Adopting the parabolic form, articulation shall be given to undertones and suggestions that reach us in revelation, nature, and human experience.

I.—“DARK SAYINGS” ARE CONSTANTLY CONFRONTING US AS WE PASS THROUGH THE PILGRIMAGE OF LIFE. We are constantly being reminded of the limitation of our knowledge by the fact that around almost every subject we investigate final mysteries gather; and theoretical enquiry is brought to a stand. This is pre-eminently true in relation to the word, works, and ways of God. What “dark sayings” reach us (a) *From the realm of Nature*. “The heavens declare the glory of God,” &c. All God’s works praise Him, and teach us invaluable lessons; but, the music of nature seems set to a minor key, there is a sad undertone—sob and moan—in the language of the whole creation. There may be a music of the spheres, and perpetual music in creation, but they suggest dark problems that often startle and depress. *Blight, storm, volcano, earthquake, pestilence, famine, floods, pain, decay, death*—these are aspects and articulations of nature that are enigmatical; sayings that in themselves are very “dark.” (b) *From the realm of Providence*. In the history of nations, and of individuals, the wicked seem to triumph as often as the righteous; virtue is often trampled in the dust, as vice ascends the throne. The vision Ezekiel had of the mysterious wheel indicates the incomprehensibleness of the ways of God in His government of the world. As the great events of time evolve, a voice comes from the darkness that envelopes them, “Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.” (c) *From the pages of Holy Scripture*. The account of creation, the fall of man, the introduction of sorrow and death; declarations concerning the nature and character of God, redemption, regeneration, justification, resurrection, immortality; these themes are associated with “dark sayings” that transcend human knowledge, indeed the language employed frequently veils,

as much as reveals, what it describes. Because the Bible contains so many things hard to be understood, to obey its precepts we must walk by faith and not by sight. (d) *From our Individual Experiences.* Losses, crosses, disappointments, pain, sickness, bereavement, death,—all these are strange things, “dark sayings,” that puzzle and perplex heart and mind. In the Christian life, exposure to temptation, propensity to declension, liability to fall, constant struggle with unbelief, presumption, and depravity,—these suggest “dark sayings” frequently producing despondency and dismay.

Simply to dwell on these things would be to take a pessimist view of life, and make it seem not only worthless but intolerable. To increase in such knowledge would be to increase in sorrow; brooding over the “dark sayings” would plunge the soul into a dungeon of despair. But, thank God, Nature, Providence, Scripture, Experience have their *bright* as well as “dark sayings,” and the “dark sayings” may be set to heavenly music. The psalmist uttered his “dark sayings” upon the harp.

II.—“DARK SAYINGS” CAN ONLY BE CALMLY CONFRONTED AS THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE MUSIC OF HEAVEN. Atheism and agnosticism have no harp upon which to set their “dark sayings”; they utter them with sighs and moans, and settle into the silence of despair. *The “dark sayings” of Creation* can be set to music, as the wisdom, goodness, and power of the great Creator are shown to comprehend and harmonize all, making all things reveal His glory and conduce to the well-being of every living thing. *The “dark sayings” of Providence* can be set to music as we remember that the hand of God is in history; that there is no blind chance or inexorable fate, but an intelligent, merciful purpose ever-present, bringing light out of darkness, harmony out of discord, good out of evil, life out of death. So with relation to the *sacred Scriptures*; their “dark sayings” about sin can be set to the music of mercy; about death, to the music of immortality; about the justice and sovereignty of God, to the music of the Divine Fatherhood. In all the problems that seem so dark *in our individual lives*, let the music of trust inspire us with gladness and joy. Some of the sweetest psalms that David sang sprang from dark and

sorrowful circumstances. Many of our sweetest sanctuary songs are the outcome of heart-pangs and soul-travail. (e.g. Henry Kirke White, Henry Francis Lyte, William Cowper, &c.) Sufferers have borne protracted anguish, martyrs the horrors of martyrdom, as they set the mysteries of time to the music of eternity; thus has the grave been robbed of victory and the sting plucked from death. Men "learn in suffering what they teach in song."

Let us seek grace to imitate the example of the psalmist. Let us not hang our harps upon the willows and refuse to sing the songs of Zion in this pilgrim-land. We have many strings to strike; when tempted to doubt strike the string of *faith*,—to despond strike the string of *hope*,—to backslide strike the string of *love*. Let us make melody in our tuneful hearts, let all the strings of holy capacity vibrate and resound. Sweep the strings of *promise*, *prophecy*, *gratitude*, *resignation*, *consecration*; let there be full and jubilant music, all the strings at concert pitch. Through sin the instrument of our spiritual nature is out of tune; He who endowed us with it will retune and restore it, and teach us how to praise Him. Here we learn the secret of a holy and happy life. Heaven's hallelujah chorus must be rehearsed here; the "dark sayings" of earth will all be translated into light and sweetness when the mystery of time is over. *Here*, we see things, and speak of them darkly; *there*, clearly, "face to face." What we know not now, we shall know hereafter. The problems of earth all solved, enigmas all explained, we shall join the harpers on the glassy sea, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.—"What is there which should lead us to conclude that prayer is not a mode appointed by the Ruler of the universe for obtaining His good and greatest gifts in the same manner as bodily exertion is requisite for acquiring a supply of temporal advantages."—Lord Chancellor HATHERLEY.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

"The End of the Lord."

Chapter v. 9-11.—"GRUDGE NOT ONE AGAINST ANOTHER, BRETHREN, LEST YE BE CONDEMNED: BEHOLD, THE JUDGE STAND-ETH BEFORE THE DOOR. TAKE, MY BRETHREN, THE PROPHETS, WHO HAVE SPOKEN IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, FOR AN EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING AFFLICTION, AND OF PATIENCE. BEHOLD, WE COUNT THEM HAPPY WHICH ENDURE. YE HAVE HEARD OF THE PATIENCE OF JOB, AND HAVE SEEN THE END OF THE LORD; THAT THE LORD IS VERY PITIFUL, AND OF TENDER MERCY."

THE first reason, or rather the ground of all the reasons, why the apostle exhorted the suffering Christians to patience was the coming of the Lord, the sure and certain hope of His appearing. He would put an end to their sufferings, He would deliver them from the hands of their enemies, He would hide them behind the curtains of His pavilion, where the hand of the oppressor could reach them no more. The next reason was, that out of all these

Three sufferings of theirs there would by-and-bye be
exhortations reaped a rich harvest of joy and gladness: there
to patience. had been the sowing in tears, there would be as
certainly the reaping in joy: but the reaping does not come the
day after the sowing, it is many days after, days of patient
waiting and watching for the early and latter rain. Is it not
worth while to wait, is it not worth while to endure, with the
certainty and assurance that the precious fruit is to be gathered
in, "golden-headed, ripe, and strong," in the day of the Lord?
Still another reason, the example of the prophets, of those who
have spoken in the name of the Lord. They suffered, they also
endured; though they were oppressed, they did not succumb to

their oppressors, they did not lose their faith in the righteous governor of the whole earth; though waters of a full cup were wrung out to them, they held fast to Him who put the cup to their lips,—they knew in whom they had believed, and were persuaded that He, who “moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform,” would by-and-bye interpret His own doings, and that when His purposes had ripened to a complete fulfilment, these purposes would be seen to be full of grace, breaking in blessings on the heads of those who should now be glad that they had been left to mourn so long under the oppression of the enemy, to remain so long under the cloud. “Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord.”

It is to show the aggravation of the sin, the intensification of the oppression, that the apostle draws attention to the fact that the prophets who thus spake in the name of the Lord, men sent to deliver *His* message, and having no other desire than that that message should produce peaceable fruits in the hearts of those to whom they delivered it, should have been subjected to such sufferings. They had no selfish ends of their own to gain by delivering their message; it would have been more pleasant to flesh and blood to have prophesied smooth things to everybody, or as one of them in a faithless moment once did, Jonah, who himself tells the story how he fled from the presence of the Lord rather than deliver the message he had received. They had no selfish end to gain by speaking in the name of the Lord; it was not their own selfish purposes they were pushing, their own schemes they were trying to bring to a successful end. It was the purposes of truth, it was the schemes of mercy, it was goodwill to their fellow-men; it was when they were trying to bless their fellow-men that they were rewarded with curses, it was when they sought to save that they themselves were condemned and killed. They spake in the name of the Lord. You would have thought that such men would have been welcomed. *Because they spake* in the name of the Lord they were persecuted, tortured, killed. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword.

The aggravation of the sin is apparent; no less apparent is the heroism of the endurance with which the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord endured. It was not with them as with the mere professors of the parable, who, when persecution arose, were immediately offended. On the contrary, the opposition of men but threw them back more firmly on the strength of Him who had sent them on such perilous errands, and who had *not* sent them on a warfare on their own charges. Moses, and the cruel, ungenerous treatment he often received at the hands of the very people he was leading from Egypt to Canaan, and the sore heart this stiff-necked race often gave him; Elijah, and his solitary, persecuted life; Micaiah, and the hatred of king and court; Jeremiah in the dungeon; Isaiah sawn asunder. And yet not one of the goodly company drew back, not one of them flung up his commission, not one of them but endured to the end. Doubtless they were often wearied in the greatness of their way; doubtless they often wondered, yea, and expostulated, "How long, O Lord, how long?" Doubtless they desponded, and even from their lips you hear such words as these: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers"; but doubtless, also, they rose up out of their despondency, and in the strength with which they were strengthened from on high so endured, so triumphed, that their names shine forth to us in the firmament of the past, the far flaming beacons by which God would guide and encourage us,—examples of suffering and examples of patience; examples of suffering, that we may not flinch from it or sink under it when we meet with it in the way of duty; examples of patience, that we may be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

This exhortation to patience from example is one which must have come home to the readers of James's Epistle with peculiar force, which, indeed, must come to all with peculiar force. "Things seen are mightier than things heard." These prophets did not only urge men to suffer for righteousness sake, they suffered for righteousness sake: they did not say, "Go into that barren land for God's sake"; they said,

The prophets
who
endured.

Example and
precept.

"Come into this barren land." It was not precept only with them, it was practice, example as well, and example has a power of its own which mere precept never has. You are suffering, there are troubles in your lives which greatly distress and, indeed, overwhelm you. Well, it is so; and it would be poor consolation to try to persuade you that your troubles were not real, but are you the only one? Have you had no predecessors in that path? Do you not see all around the footsteps of other travellers who have been in the valley before you? Are your sufferings great? Theirs were greater still, for ye have not yet at least resisted unto blood, striving against sin! Take, my brethren, for an example, and be strengthened and encouraged by it, take for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord.

Of examples of patience under suffering of which the goodly company of the prophets afford so many, the apostle selects one by name, singles it out from all others as if it more prominently than all others deserved to be introduced with a special eulogium: Behold we count them blessed who endure, who endure to the end, and who, enduring to the end, only make it more gloriously evident that the end of the Lord is that He is very pitiful and of tender mercy. It is the case of the patriarch Job, of him who suffered so severely that he actually cursed the day wherein he was born, and whose name is yet, wherever his story is known, but another name for patience, the example to all generations of that blessed endurance which receives the crown of life. *Ye have heard of the patience of Job.* Yes, and we have heard of the impatience of Job, and we need to remind ourselves of his impatience, else we shall not be able to understand how the Scripture is very pitiful and of tender mercy; when coming to speak about Job it has nothing to say of the impatience, but only of the patience, which being of the essence of his religion was so much the stay of his soul. "*O that it would please God to destroy me, that He would let loose His hand and cut me off! Am I a sea or a whale that Thou settest a watch over me? I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the*

The patience
of Job.

bitterness of my soul! Show me wherefore Thou contendest with me, Thou art turned to be cruel." Is this the example of patience? Is it this we are to imitate? Let me not be unjust! For what have I been doing? I have been after the manner of men not after the manner of God appreciating the shortcomings

The act or
the tract;
what is the
line of
direction?

of His servant, I have been repeating the utterances of the agony of the moment as if they were the record of the settled convictions of his life, I have been taking up fragments, shattered portions, words that he repented of even as he was uttering them, as if they were what he was prepared to stand by when the storm and stress of spirit had passed away. I have not spoken the thing that was right concerning His servant Job! "Ye have heard," says Scripture, "of the patience of Job." There was patience in the man, it was the abiding reality in him underneath all the momentary impatience which was not the abiding reality in him; he often submitted to God, often blessed God, was angry with himself for the murmurings extorted from him by the sense of his sufferings, corrected himself as soon as he had spoken any unbecoming word of God, humbled himself before God—as in that last utterance when all the momentary impatience had passed away and nothing but the abiding patience proclaimed the blessing on him who had endured: "*I uttered what I understood not: things too wonderful for me which I knew not. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*" "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy"—the end of the Lord, and which just because it is the end cannot be seen at the beginning, must be waited for with

The end of
the Lord.

long patience. For it cannot be repeated too often, we are always needing the lesson, no affliction for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; it is always worst at first, by-and-bye the end of the Lord will be seen to be very pitiful and of tender mercy; as in the case before us, when the Lord turned the captivity of Job and gave him twice as much as he had before, and far more than all that, when, like the husband-

man waiting long for the precious fruits of the earth, he reaped the rich, ripe harvest of all his sufferings and all his pains.

It is a comfortable thought that in all our troubles we have to do with a pitiful and merciful God, pitiful over us so that He will not let us suffer too much, merciful over us in that when there is no reason in ourselves that we should be delivered from our troubles, He yet so abounds towards us according to the exceeding riches of His grace, for His own name's sake, not only to pardon but to purify us, and, throughout our troubles, to sanctify us and make us meet for His own presence with exceeding joy. Be patient, therefore, brethren: stablish your hearts in the hope of the appearing of your Saviour, be encouraged at the remembrance of the examples of the sufferings and of the patience of the men of God of the ancient days, look for the harvest you are sure to reap in the end. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."

And as one all-essential, absolutely necessary means of preserving your souls in patience, so ensuring that you shall not miss the precious fruits of all your patience at the last, do not grudge against each other, do not secretly and bitterly groan against each other, let the oppressions of the enemy be the only thing you need to groan under, do not add to their oppressions

Grudging and patience. by oppressing each other, let not one of you feel that the other is murmuring, grudging, groaning against the other. This is the subtle connection between the patience under the oppression of the enemy and the exhortation against grudging against each other. On a superficial glance there seems no connection between the two things, in reality the connection is very real, and how often has it been in the history of the Church, that where she has stood firm and fast under the persecution of her foes, she has fallen before the *mutual* animosities of her friends. There is nothing, the apostle knows it right well, there is nothing that will sooner undo all the patient waiting under the oppressions, nothing that will sooner wither the very bloom of a religious life, nothing that will sooner turn a fruitful field into a wilderness than this mutual grudging, these mutual animosities, and, therefore, as by

the very word of the Lord, he warns against them, threatening against those who thus mutually grudge and groan against each other the just judgments of Almighty God, of the Judge who already stands before the door.

If it was so in the days of persecution, if, when under the irritating influences of oppressions that make wise men mad, God's righteous judgments set themselves in array against those who grudged against each other, of how much sorer punishment think you will they be worthy who when there are no oppressions, manifest that spirit which forms bitter and cruelly uncharitable imputations of motives and judgments of each other, and which necessarily gives rise to those *mutual* animosities, heart-burnings, whisperings; the sure forerunners of judgment at the hands of Him who already stands before the door! "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Grudge not against each other lest ye be condemned.

It is because the members of Christian churches do not believe, do not feel, do not realise that Jesus Christ, whom they call Lord and Master, sees the grudging thought, marks the grudging spirit, hears the grudging word; it is because they do not figure to themselves the presence of Him who stands before their very door, that they lay themselves open to the warning, that they incur the danger of the judgment of which the apostle here speaks. *They* may make light of such things: the Judge who stands before the door does not make light of them; He knows there is nothing worse that can befall His church than mutual animosities among her members. And it is because the Judge knows this that He visits it with such terrible condemnation.

Suppose He were to come in; suppose in the midst of the grudgings against each other He should make inquisition for blood; suppose the cry should be heard ere there was time to repent, "The Son of Man has come!" We shudder at the thought: who could abide such a coming?

Grudge not against each other, brethren, that we be not judged: behold the Judge of us all standeth before the door!

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Praterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn not in the light of any of these schools of expositions. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence.]

No. XXVIII.

Soul Prostitution and Soul Loyalty.

“AND THE THIRD ANGEL FOLLOWED THEM, SAYING WITH A LOUD VOICE, IF ANY MAN WORSHIP THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE, AND RECEIVE HIS MARK IN HIS FOREHEAD, OR IN HIS HAND, THE SAME SHALL DRINK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD, WHICH IS POURED OUT WITHOUT MIXTURE INTO THE CUP OF HIS INDIGNATION; AND HE SHALL BE TORMENTED WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY ANGELS, AND IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB: AND THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORMENT ASCENDETH UP FOR EVER AND EVER: AND THEY HAVE NO REST DAY NOR NIGHT, WHO WORSHIP THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE, AND WHOSOEVER RECEIVETH THE MARK OF HIS NAME. HERE IS THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS: HERE ARE THEY THAT KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, AND THE FAITH OF JESUS.”—*Rev. xiv. 9-12.*

In this part of John's wonderful mental vision, or dream, on the island of Patmos, we can find illustrations of two great subjects.

I.—SOUL PROSTITUTION. “*And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud (great) voice, If any man worship*

the beast and his image, and receive (receiveth) his mark in his forehead, and in his hand.” The “*beast and his image.*” What meaneth this? Does it mean some King or Pope? Or some great wrong institution, civil or religious? No one knows, and it matters

not. I take the expression as a symbol of *Wrong* in its spirit and forms. Two things are suggested in connection with this.

First: That the prostitution of the soul to wrong is an *alarming crime*. Here is a warning, "*The angel followed, saying with a loud voice.*" Amongst the teeming populations of this earth there is nothing more terrible and alarming than to see human souls made in the image of God, rendering a practical devotion of all its spiritual powers to the morally unworthy, "the world, the flesh, and the devil"; because according to a law of mind the object of the soul's devotion transfigures it into its own character. Hence the human spirit gets buried in the fleshly, absorbed in the selfish and the worldly. Thus everywhere we find minds that should expand into seraphs sinking into grubs, worshipping the "*beast*," sordid sycophants, not soaring saints, the miserable creatures, not the mighty masters of circumstances. Notice—

Secondly: That the prostitution of the soul to wrong

always incurs lamentable suffering. It is said, "*The same* (he also) *shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture* (prepared unmixed) *in the cup of His indignation* (anger); *and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.*" The metaphors here are borrowed from the sacred books of the Hebrew people, and they convey the idea of suffering of an alarming kind, suggesting (1) A consciousness of Divine antagonism. "*Wine of the wrath of God.*" In the sense of malignant passion there is no wrath in Him who is LOVE. But it is a psychological fact that the man who suffers because he has done another an injury, has a consciousness that the one he has offended is angry with him, and this consciousness is the chief element in his suffering. The metaphor suggests (2) A sense of intense agony. "*Shall be tormented with fire and brimstone.*" Brimstone adds intensity to the heat and fury to the flames of fire. "My punishment is greater than I

can bear," said Cain. A guilty conscience has its Tartarus or Gehenna within itself. The metaphor suggests (3) A state of constant restlessness. "*They have no rest day nor (and) night.*" There is no rest in sin. "The wicked are like the troubled sea." A guilty soul under a sense of sin is like Noah's dove fluttering over tumultuous billows. The verses illustrate—

II.—SOUL LOYALTY. "*Here is the patience of the saints.*" "The meaning here," says *Moses Stuart*, "is either thus, here then in the dreadful punishment of the wicked every Christian may see of what avail his patience and obedient spirit and faith in Christ are; or here is a disclosure respecting the wicked which is adapted to encourage a patient endurance of the evils of persecution, and a constancy in obedience to the Divine commands and to the Christian faith." What is patience? It is not insensibility. Some people are lauded for their patience who should be denounced for their stoicism and indifference. Patience implies at least two things.

(1) *The existence of trials.* Where the path of life is all smooth, flowery, and pleasant, where all the winds of life are temperate, bright, and balmy, where all the echoes of life are free from discordant notes, and beating the sweetest melodies, where in fact life is entirely free from trial, there is no room for patience. Patience lives only in difficulty and danger, in storms and tempests. Patience implies (2) *The highest mental power.* Man's highest power of mind is seen not in unsurpassed mechanical inventions, or the sublimest productions of art, not in the most baffling and confounding strategies of bloody war, hell's own creation, but in the successful effort to govern all the impulses and master all the boisterous passions of the human soul. "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power."* This is a remarkable expression. It seems as if the prophet Nahum meant that God is slow to anger *because* He is great in power; if He had less power He would be less patient. A man may be slow to anger

* See *Homilist*, vol. xxxiii., page 242.

and slow to deal out vengeance because he lacks power to do so. But God is slow to anger because He has abundance of power. His power of self-control is infinite. Truly does Solomon say, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."* The greater the sinner and the greater the sneak, the better able to take cities, but it requires the greatest man to govern his own soul.

"Be patient, oh be patient! Put your ear against the earth, Listen there how noiselessly the germ of the seed has birth; How noiselessly and gently it upheaves its little way, Till it parts the scarcely broken ground and the blade stands up in the day.

"Be patient, oh be patient! The germs of mighty thought Must have their silent undergrowth, must under ground be wrought. But as sure as there's a power that makes the grass appear, Our land shall be green with liberty, the blade-time shall be here.

"Be patient, oh be patient! Go and watch the wheat-ears grow So imperceptibly that ye can mark, nor change, nor throe; Day after day, day after day, till the ear is fully grown, And then again, day after day, till the ripened field is brown.

"Be patient, oh be patient! Though yet your hopes are green, The harvest-fields of freedom shall be crowned with sunny sheen; Be ripening, be ripening, mature your silent way, Till the whole broad land is tongued with fire on freedom's harvest day."—*R. C. Trench.*

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No. XXIX.

Heaven's Description of the Sainted Dead.

"AND I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING UNTO ME, WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD, FROM HENCEFORTH: YEA, SAITH THE SPIRIT, THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS; AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM."—*Rev. xiv. 13.*

HERE is a Voice from heaven. Voices from earth are plentiful—they load our air and din our ears. We have voices

from the markets and voices from the parliament, voices from the church and voices from the college, voices on

* See *Practical Philosopher*, page 331.

every subject and in every key. They are contradictory and unsatisfactory; they solve not the deepest problems of the soul. Thank God there is a voice from Heaven, let us listen to it. It comes from infallibility itself, and teaches the most momentous questions of interest and destiny. Notice

I.—HEAVEN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE SAINTED DEAD. "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.*" Their character was that of vital union with Christ. This union may include two things.

First: Their existence in His *affections*. They are in His heart; He thinks upon them; He plans for them; He causes all things to work together for their good.

Secondly: Their existence in His *character*. This character implies two things. (1) A *moral* change, and (2) A *judicial* change. Notice—

II.—HEAVEN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CONDITION OF THE SAINTED DEAD.

First: Their blessedness is in rest from all trying labour. "*They may rest from their labours.*" Rest from all trying labour pertaining to our (1) physical subsistence; (2) intellectual culture; (3) spiritual cultivation; (4) to benefit our fellow-men.

Secondly: Their blessedness is in the influence of their works. "*Their works do follow them.*"

Thirdly: Their blessedness begins immediately after death. "*From henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit.*"

Fourthly: Their blessedness is vouched by the Spirit of God. "*Saith the Spirit.*" Who declares this blessedness? "*The Spirit.*" *

"I would die my death *in Christo*,
Breathing in His love I'm blest;
When this frame to dust returneth
I shall enter into rest.
In that rest I shall adore Him,
In the strains of sacred love,
With the ransomed of all races
Gathered in the heavens above.
Aid me, Lord, to die *in Christo*,
Oh, *in Christo* let me die!"

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* For amplification of these points see *Homilist*, Vol. XV., p. 83.

No. XXX.

The Moral Seasons of Humanity.

"AND I LOOKED, AND BEHOLD A WHITE CLOUD, AND UPON THE CLOUD ONE SAT LIKE UNTO THE SON OF MAN, HAVING ON HIS HEAD A GOLDEN CROWN, AND IN HIS HAND A SHARP SICKLE. AND ANOTHER ANGEL CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE, CRYING WITH A LOUD VOICE TO HIM THAT SAT ON THE CLOUD, THRUST IN THY SICKLE, AND REAP: FOR THE TIME IS COME FOR THEE TO REAP; FOR THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH IS RIPE. AND HE THAT SAT ON THE CLOUD THRUST IN HIS SICKLE ON THE EARTH; AND THE EARTH WAS REAPED. AND ANOTHER ANGEL CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE WHICH IS IN HEAVEN, HE ALSO HAVING A SHARP SICKLE. AND ANOTHER ANGEL CAME OUT FROM THE ALTAR, WHICH HAD POWER OVER FIRE; AND CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE TO HIM THAT HAD THE SHARP SICKLE, SAYING, THRUST IN THY SHARP SICKLE, AND GATHER THE CLUSTERS OF THE VINE OF THE EARTH; FOR HER GRAPES ARE FULLY RIPE. AND THE ANGEL THRUST IN HIS SICKLE INTO THE EARTH, AND GATHERED THE VINE OF THE EARTH, AND CAST IT INTO THE GREAT WINEPRESS OF THE WRATH OF GOD. AND THE WINEPRESS WAS TRODDEN WITHOUT THE CITY, AND BLOOD CAME OUT OF THE WINEPRESS, EVEN UNTO THE HORSE BRIDLES, BY THE SPACE OF A THOUSAND AND SIX HUNDRED FURLONGS."—*Revelation xiv. 14-20.*

THERE are three moral seasons implied in this section of the apocalyptic vision.

I.—THE RIPENING season. "*And I looked (saw), and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the (a) Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.*" This language may be taken as an illustration of that supreme Divinity that presides over all the moral seasons of mankind. He is *glorious*. He is encircled with a "*cloud*," dazzling and splendid. He is *human*. He is "*like unto*

the Son of Man." Supreme Divinity is full of humanity, and humanity is full of God. He is *royal*. He has "*upon His head a golden crown.*" He is "*the King of kings and Lord of lords.*" He is *absolute*. He has "*in His hand a sharp sickle.*" He has the power to put an end to the whole system whenever He pleases; He kills and He makes alive. Such is the Being that presides over our histories, our lives, and destinies. Our world is not left to chance or fate, blind force or arbitrary despotism. There is an intelligent Being

over it, all-glorious, yet human, royal and absolute. He presides over the ripening season. Months before the sickle is thrust in the ripening has been going on. There are two classes of principles, good and evil, which are seeds growing in all human souls. Both are implanted. Neither of them are inbred: the seed of evil is not constitutional, the seeds of good are almost exterminated by the seeds of sin. "A man sowed good seed in his field, but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." The Spirit of Evil implants the one. "An enemy came and sowed tares." The Son of Man implants the other. Both, in all souls, are constantly growing and advancing to ripeness. Although human nature is made for truth and right, it can grow error and wrong. It can develop a false impression or an erroneous sentiment into a Upas that shall spread its baneful branches over empires, and poison the heart of ages. Observe:—

II.—The HARVEST season. "*Thrust in (send forth) Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come.*" All life culminates

in maturity. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Growth is but life running into ripeness, as the river runs to the ocean. "The harvest of the earth is ripe, the grapes are fully ripe." In connection with this it is suggested that the harvest is under the direction of a supreme intelligence. "*And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud.*" The angel had no power to snatch the sickle from the Divine hand and employ it. The Divine permission is absolutely necessary, life and death are with Him. "There is an appointed time for man upon the earth." No creature or combination of creatures, however mighty, can abbreviate or prolong the appointed period. There are no premature destinies in human history. Angels it may be in countless numbers await His behest. They are ready to strike down when He permits. Death is ever on the wing, silently and stealthily he approaches every human being and strikes the moment he has permission. Notice:—

III.—The VINTAGE season.

"Thrust in (send forth) thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." The vintage is a section of the harvest. The vine reaches its maturity and has its harvest as well as the ears of corn, and the pressing of these grapes is the vintage. Three things are suggested in connection with this vintage.

First: Divine severity. *"The great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress."* Grapes in the press were usually trodden by the feet of men (see Isaiah lxiii. 2, 3; Lam. i. 15). The idea of severity could scarcely fail to be conveyed to the spectator whose feet trampled on the soft, blooming, beautiful grape, so that the juice like its very blood streamed forth. *"The wrath of God."* There

is no wrath in God but the wrath of love. Divine law is but love speaking in the imperative mood; Divine retribution is but Divine love chastising the child to bring him back to the right and the true. Here is suggested—

Secondly: Great abundance. *"Blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses bridles."* That is, the juice flowing like a deep river, rising to the very bridles of the horses. Who shall measure the final issues of the moral seasons of humanity? Here is suggested—

Thirdly: Extensive range. *"A thousand and six hundred furlongs"* = a hundred and fifty miles. A definite number of miles for an indefinite space. The final issue of souls will be as wide as immensity.

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THE NEAR DUTY.—"The only way to regenerate the world is to do the duty which lies nearest to us, and not to hunt after grand far-fetched ones for ourselves. If each drop of rain chose where it should fall, God's showers would not fall, as they do now, on the evil and on the good alike."—Canon KINGSLEY.

No. XXXI.

Divine Severity and Human Heroism.

“AND I SAW ANOTHER SIGN IN HEAVEN, GREAT AND MARVELLOUS, SEVEN ANGELS HAVING THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES; FOR IN THEM IS FILLED UP THE WRATH OF GOD. AND I SAW AS IT WERE A SEA OF GLASS MINGLED WITH FIRE: AND THEM THAT HAD GOTTEN THE VICTORY OVER THE BEAST, AND OVER HIS IMAGE, AND OVER HIS MARK, AND OVER THE NUMBER OF HIS NAME, STAND ON THE SEA OF GLASS, HAVING THE HARPS OF GOD. AND THEY SING THE SONG OF MOSES THE SERVANT OF GOD, AND THE SONG OF THE LAMB, SAYING, GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; JUST AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS, THOU KING OF SAINTS. WHO SHALL NOT FEAR THEE, O LORD, AND GLORIFY THY NAME? FOR THOU ONLY ART HOLY: FOR ALL NATIONS SHALL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THEE; FOR THY JUDGMENTS ARE MADE MANIFEST.”—*Rev. xv. 1-4.*

THIS fragment of John's vision, or dream, brings under our attention and serves to illustrate two subjects, *Divine severity* and *human heroism*.

I.—DIVINE SEVERITY. “*And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up (finished) the wrath of God.*” Undoubtedly in the government of this world there is the stormy as well as the mild, the gloomy as well as the pleasant. The government under which we live on this earth often assumes aspects of terrible severity. Its manifold ministers or angels bear to us manifold “*plagues*”—afflictions, which

our sin-stricken consciences refer to Divine indignation or wrath.

First: The principle of severity is seen in *material nature*. In the inorganic realms all things do not seem mild and pleasant. We have tornadoes sweeping destruction over sea and land, we have earthquakes that engulf cities, sounds are heard and sights are witnessed that overwhelm with terror and alarm.

Secondly: This principle of severity is seen in the *plantal realm*. In gardens and orchards, as well as in the fields and woods, the open commons and the wild prairies there is heard the moaning groan and felt the blasting

breath of severity shivering the fruit, scattering the blossoms like hoar frost, freezing the very roots of life.

Thirdly: This principle of severity is seen in the *sentient domain*. From the behemoths that prowl in the forests, and the leviathans that sport in oceans, to the tiniest microbes in the microscopic world there are aspects of severity, pains of birth and death, of hunger and thirst, and of predatorial ravages and tortures. There is an undertone of sadness heard throughout. "The whole creation groaneth," &c.

Fourthly: This principle of severity is seen in *human history*. Bodily diseases, secular indigence, social annoyances, heart bereavements, physical dissolution,—in all these there is often the ghastly appearance of Divine severity. The "*seven angels*" with their "*seven plagues*" appear in all directions. I am far enough from averring that the ministry of pain is a malignant ministry, but otherwise, it is benign. Will the ministry of pain ever continue? Will the "*seven angels*" be ever on the wing, bearing the "*plagues*?" Cowper says—

"The groans of nature in this nether world,
Which heaven has heard for ages,
Will have an end."

Will they have an end? I trow not. Heaven grant they may. Here is—

II.—HUMAN HEROISM. "*And I saw as it were a sea of glass (a glassy sea) mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over (that come victorious from) the beast, and over (from) his image, and over his mark, and over (from) the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass (standing by the glassy sea) having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses,*" &c. The heroes here suggested are—

First: Those who have *conquered the wrong*. They are those "*who have gotten the victory over the beast.*" And what is the beast? Moral wrong in all its elements and forms. Sin is a hideous, ravenous, iniquitous "*beast,*" served and worshipped by unredeemed men the world over. The foe against which the true hero fights is sin and sin only. He who destroys life and tramples on human rights is no hero, but a mercenary murderer. From no

character do I recoil with such horror as from him who sells his time, his body, his all to slaughter his fellow men. Nor do I feel scarcely a greater abhorrence for such a character than for those who, professing to be the ministers of Christ, rhetorically extol such as heroes, and subscribe to monuments to perpetuate their infamous history. I wonder greatly that the reports of the horrors of that war now going on in the Soudan, inaugurated and supported, alas, by what has been rightly denominated the present shuffling, starving, slaughtering Parliament, do not rouse all England to arms against the Governments and the Churches that can tolerate for an instant such stupendous crimes. The heroes here are—

Secondly: Those who ascribe their *victory to God*. Observe (1) Their posture. "*They stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.*" It is suggested that their position is one of *safety*. The sea does not surge about them, it is beneath them, hard as ice. It is a position of *splendour*. The crystal sea on which they stand is made brilliant by fire.

There is no posture of soul so sublime and safe as the true posture of worship. The Shekinah beams around them as their glory and defence. Observe (2) Their anthem. "*They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.*"

1. Their anthem breathes *triumphant praise*. They recognise in their triumphs the "*great and marvellous works*" of God and the truth and rectitude of His ways. God is righteous. "*Just (righteous) and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints*" (the ages). Notice—

First: *The demands of His law attest the truth of this testimony*. (1) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." His demand is our supreme love. (2) "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye unto them." Can anything be more just?

Secondly: *The intuitions of His moral creatures attest the truth of this testimony*. In all moral intelligences there is (1) An intuitive sense of the right. (2) An intuitive love of the right. (3) An intuitive remorse for the

wrong. (4) An intuitive appeal to God as the Friend of the right.

Thirdly: *The mediation of His Son attests the truth of this testimony.* (1) His life was the development of Divine righteousness. (2) His death was the highest homage to Divine rectitude. (3) His system is the promoter of Divine righteousness.

Fourthly: *The retributions of His government attest the truth of this testimony.* God is righteous. Some may doubt it and others may declare that His "ways are not equal," but those who know Him best, the holy and sanctified intelligences of heaven chant it evermore in the ear of the universe as a verity at once the most obvious and delightful.*

.2. Their anthem breathes *philanthropic devotion.* "Who shall not fear Thee, O God, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments (righteous acts) are made manifest." The words may be regarded as expressing a desire that all men, all the nations should worship God. Genuine piety is always philanthropic. He who loves the Father will love His children, and will desire all the brethren to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Genuine piety and genuine philanthropy are convertible expressions, modifications of the same sovereign principle,—love.

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"The foundation of all happiness, temporal and eternal, is faith in the righteousness, the mercy, and the love of God."—Archdeacon HARE.

* See *Homilist*, vol. xv., page 20.

No. XXXII.

Genuine Discipline of Soul.

"AND AFTER THAT I LOOKED, AND, BEHOLD THE TEMPLE OF THE TABERNACLE OF THE TESTIMONY IN HEAVEN WAS OPENED: AND THE SEVEN ANGELS CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE, HAVING THE SEVEN PLAGUES, CLOTHED IN PURE AND WHITE LINEN, AND HAVING THEIR BREASTS GIRDED WITH GOLDEN GIRDLES. AND ONE OF THE FOUR BEASTS GAVE UNTO THE SEVEN ANGELS SEVEN GOLDEN VIALS FULL OF THE WRATH OF GOD, WHO LIVETH FOR EVER AND EVER. AND THE TEMPLE WAS FILLED WITH SMOKE FROM THE GLORY OF GOD, AND FROM HIS POWER; AND NO MAN WAS ABLE TO ENTER INTO THE TEMPLE, TILL THE SEVEN PLAGUES OF THE SEVEN ANGELS WERE FULFILLED."—Rev. xv. 5-8.

I DO not know that I can turn these words to a more legitimate and practical use than by using them as an illustration of *genuine soul discipline*. In this light they suggest to us the *source*, the *ministers*, and the *indispensability* of genuine soul discipline.

I.—The SOURCE of genuine soul discipline. "*After that (these things) I looked (saw), and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*" The discipline, as we have seen, was of a *painful* character. It involved "seven angels" with "seven plagues." Whence did it proceed? Not from secondary instrumentalities, fortuitous circumstances, or a heartless, rigorous fatality, but

direct from the presence of the Infinite. The language here points to the inner compartment of the old Jewish Tabernacle, known as the "Holy of Holies." There the Jew regarded Jehovah as especially revealing Himself to them, and as communicating to them His ideas and plans. To a genuinely disciplined soul all influences from heaven tending to purify and ennoble are regarded as coming direct from the presence of the Great Father. Its inner eye, so to speak, is so opened and quickened that it glances into the very shrine of the Almighty. It feels that every good and perfect gift cometh down from the "Father of lights," &c. It is a characteristic, or rather a

law, of true religiousness that it bears the soul away through nature, churches, and chapels right up into the very presence of God, to the very fountal Source of all good, the mighty mainspring that works the universe. God is its all in all. It can truly say, "*I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.*" The grand difference between a spurious and a genuine religiousness of soul is this,—the one busies itself about the fussy doings and foggy dogmas of little sects, and the other is so absorbed with the Supreme Good that it feels with the old Hebrew, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and whom on earth do I desire but Thee?" Notice—

II.—The MINISTERS of genuine soul discipline. "*And the seven angels came out of the temple, having (that had) the seven plagues.*" The Great Father whomakes His children "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," carries on His sublime educational work by angels or ministers. Concerning those ministers, observe (1) They are complete in number and qualification. "*Seven*

angels" and "*seven plagues.*"

(2) They go forth direct from His presence. "*Came out of the temple,*" &c. (3) They are divinely marked and attired as God's priests. "*Clothed (arrayed) in pure and white linen* (precious stones pure and bright), *and having their breasts girded* (girt about the breasts) *with golden girdles.*"

(4) They have a commission of severity. "*And one of the four beasts* (living creatures) *gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials* (bowls) *full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.*" (The wrath of God is His antagonism to sin). In the great moral school of humanity there has always been, as in all schools, not a little severity. True soul-education involves pain. The very severity is a blessing. "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment," &c. Whilst the majority of men regard this life as a market, or a banquet, or a play-ground, he who regards it as a great moral school has the only true idea, as a school in which every object is a lesson,

every agent a teacher, and every teacher coming forth directly from God. "*Clothed in pure and white linen and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.*" Notice—

III.—The INDISPENSABILITY of genuine soul discipline. "*No man (no one) was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled*" (should be finished). The idea suggested is that no man could enter into the shrine or into the immediate presence of God until the discipline had been fully accomplished. Here is a commentary on this. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity." Cleanness in hands and heart

means having conduct void of offence towards God and man. Freedom from vanity means moral reality. These two things, moral *cleanness* and moral *reality*, are the qualifications for ascending to the "holy hill," or fellowship with God. "It is not," says *Luther*, "he who sings so well or so many psalms, nor he who fasts or watches so many days, nor he who divides his own among the poor, nor he who preaches to others, nor he who lives quietly, kindly, and friendly, nor, in fine, is it he who knows all sciences and languages, nor he who works all virtuous and all good works that ever any man spoke or read of, but it is he alone who is pure within and without."

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"What would become of a man in a vacuum? All his members would bulge out until they burst. This is a true image of anarchy, whether political or moral, intellectual or spiritual. We need the pressure of an atmosphere around us to keep us whole and at one."—Archdeacon HARE.

No. XXXIII.

Predestined Suffering in the Government of the World.

“AND I HEARD A GREAT VOICE OUT OF THE TEMPLE SAYING TO THE SEVEN ANGELS, GO YOUR WAYS, AND POUR OUT THE VIALS OF THE WRATH OF GOD UPON THE EARTH. AND THE FIRST WENT, AND POURED OUT HIS VIAL UPON THE EARTH; AND THERE FELL A NOISOME AND GRIEVOUS SORE UPON THE MEN WHICH HAD THE MARK OF THE BEAST, AND UPON THEM WHICH WORSHIPPED HIS IMAGE. AND THE SECOND ANGEL POURED OUT HIS VIAL UPON THE SEA; AND IT BECAME AS THE BLOOD OF A DEAD MAN: AND EVERY LIVING SOUL DIED IN THE SEA,” &c.
—*Revelation* xvi. 1-21.

“It is incredible,” says *Bishop Horsley*, “to any one who has not made the experiment, what proficiency may be made by studying the Scriptures without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the sacred volume mutually furnish for each other.” Whoever has with honesty of purpose and persevering endeavour studied the Bible for himself will readily endorse this statement of the Bishop. I would add to this and say, that it is incredible to any one who has not made the experiment, to know what an amount of priceless, vital, and practical truth can be got out of the Bible by studying its utterances in connection with the unbiassed reason and common

sense of the human mind. Using these Apocalyptic visions of John as an illustration of the great truths dictated by reason and confirmed by the consciousness of every man, they come to us as a priceless revelation.

The great truth which this chapter suggests to us and strikingly illustrates is that there is PREDESTINED SUFFERING IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD. There are “*seven plagues*,” sufferings, that have been developing, still are being developed, and will be to the end. The abyss of agony contained in these seven plagues is immeasurable to all but the Infinite. The old dogma fabricated by the old makers of our theology, viz., that the physical suffering in the world

is caused by sin, is an exploded fallacy, which all geological museums ridicule in mute laughter. Suffering is an element in the government of this world. Taking the whole of this chapter we shall find it illustrative of three subjects, viz., that *all the dispensations of this suffering are under the direction of God, they have all a great moral purpose, and they have all an influence co-extensive with the universe.* Observe—

I.—All the dispensations of this suffering ARE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF GOD. “*And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways (go ye), and pour out the vials (seven bowls) of the wrath of God upon the earth.*” From the very Shrine of the Almighty, the Holy of Holies, He deals out and regulates every item of the sevenfold plagues.

First: He *orders their agents.* Each of the “*seven angels*” or messengers are sent forth by Him. “*Go your ways.*” The Supreme Governor of the universe conducts His affairs through the agencies of others, a vast system of

secondary instrumentalities. Thus, through all nature, He gives life, supports life, and takes away life. Albeit He sits at the head and is the absolute Author of all. There is not a pain that quivers in the nerve of any sentient being that comes not from Him. He says, “*Go your ways,*” and nothing moves but by His behests. He kills and He makes alive. Is not this a soothing and a strengthening thought under all the dispensations of sorrow?

Secondly: *He appoints their seasons.* The “*seven angels*” do not all come together, each has its period. Every impulse that moves throughout the creation, whether it be to shake a leaf in the forest, or to wheel systems throughout immensity, goes forth at His own time. All times and seasons are with Him. When Shakspeare says, “*Troubles come not singly but in battalions,*” he is not right. Mercifully they do come singly to individuals and communities, some in one period of life and some in another. To man, collectively, they are ages apart, from the groans of Abel to

the throes of the last judgment. There is not a drop of sorrow in any cup that comes not from heaven.

Thirdly: He *fixes their places*. Each of the seven angels who, under God, are to dispense the plagues, has his place assigned him. Each had his "*vial*," or bowl, and each bowl had a place on which it was to be poured. The first came upon "*the earth*," the second on "*the sea*," the third upon "*the rivers and fountains*," the fourth upon "*the sun*," the fifth upon "*the seat (throne) of the beast*," the sixth upon "*the great river Euphrates*," and the seventh "*into the air*." Whether there is a reference here to plagues in Egypt, or sufferings elsewhere, I know not, no one does know, nor does it matter. They were phantoms that rolled like clouds in the vision of John, and as such they illustrate the grand truth that even the very scenes and seasons of all our sorrows come from Him who is, and was, and is to be the Everlasting Father.

Fourthly: He *determines their character*. The sufferings that came forth from the

bowls were not of exactly the same kind or amount, some seemed more terrible and tremendous than others. It appeared as a painful "*sore*" upon the men of the earth, it was as death to those on the sea, it appeared as blood upon the fountains and the rivers, it appeared as scorching fire in the sun, it appeared as darkness and torture upon the throne of the beast, it appeared as a terrible drought, and as the spirits of devils like frogs on the rolling Euphrates, and it appeared as terrible convulsions in nature in the air.

How different in kind and amount are the sufferings dealt out to men. The sufferings of some are distinguished by physical diseases, some by social bereavements, some by secular losses and disappointments, some by mental perplexities, some by moral anguish, &c. "Every heart knoweth its own bitterness." So much then for the fact that all the dispensations of *predestined* sufferings are under the direction of God. Observe—

II.—All the dispensations of this suffering HAVE A

GREAT MORAL PURPOSE. The suffering of the sevenfold plagues is settled in the government of God for *moral* ends. These ends are not malignant but merciful. They are not to ruin souls but to save them. They are curative elements in the painful cup of life; they are storms to purify the moral atmosphere of the world. Disrobing these verses of all metaphorical incongruities, the suggestive grand purpose of God in all the dispensations of suffering appears to involve three things.

First: The righteous punishment of cruel persecution. *"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord (righteous art Thou), which art, and wast, and shalt be (Thou Holy One), because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."* To "*shed blood*" anyhow is one of the foulest crimes man can commit; it is an impious infraction of a fundamental law of Heaven—"Thou shalt not kill." Words which apply to man in every

conceivable capacity and relation, to the hangman and the warrior as well as to the assassin. They speak as truly to Wolseley amidst his murdering exploits in the Soudan as to any other man on the face of the earth. Blood guiltiness is the chief of crimes. But to murder "*prophets*," good men and true teachers, is the chief of murders. For this heaven would be avenged, and the whole intelligent universe will so recognise this as to break into the anthem—"Even so (yea) Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments." The moral purpose involves—

Secondly: The righteous punishment of supreme worldliness. *"And the fifth angel poured out his vial (bowl) upon the seat (throne) of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues."* Worldliness in the ascendent is indeed like this beast portrayed in the Apocalypse. It sits supreme; it has a throne, a crown, a sceptre that extends over all. Supreme worldliness, whether in the individual or the society, is a "*beast*" coarse

and hideous, and this beast with all its votaries, is to be crushed. The whole government of God moves in that direction. Truly "blessed is he that overcometh the world"—this "*beast*." The moral purpose involves—

Thirdly: The overwhelming ruin of organised wrong. "*And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.*" Great Babylon, what is it? The moral evils of the world organised into its metropolis. Falsehood, sensuality, pride, ambition, impiety, fraud, tyranny, embodied in a mighty city. This is the Babylon, and all unredeemed men are citizens in it. The Divine purpose is to destroy it. All His dispensations are against it, and will one day shiver it to pieces. "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." Wrong will not stand for ever before right. Though mountains of ice may stand

before the glowing sunbeams of a thousand summers, wrong is bound to fall ultimately before the right. Take courage, be of good cheer! Observe—

III.—All the dispensations of this suffering HAVE AN INFLUENCE CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE UNIVERSE. There was not a drop from the bowl in either of the angel's hands that terminated where it fell. The contents of these bowls are not like showers falling on the rocks in summer, which having touched them are then exhaled for ever. No, they continue to operate. The bowl that fell on the earth became an evil and painful sore, that which fell on the sea became blood and death, that which fell upon the sun scorched mankind, that which fell on the beast spread darkness and agony in all directions, that which fell upon the Euphrates produced a drought, and drew out of the mouth of the dragon wild beasts and strange dragons, the bowl that poured out its contents on the air produced lightnings, and thunders, and earthquakes, causing Babylon to be riven asunder, and every

mountain and valley to flee away. Observe (1) *Nothing in the world of mind terminates with itself.* One thought leads to another, one impression produces another elsewhere, and so on. In matter the roll of an infant's marble shakes the massive globes of space. "No man liveth unto himself." Each step we give will touch chords that will vibrate through all the arches of immensity. (2) *Whatever goes forth from mind exerts an influence on the domain of matter.* These angels, unseen messengers of the Eternal, go forth from that shrine into which no eye has ever pierced, the secret place of Him "who dwelleth in the light, whom no man hath seen or can see. Who are they? What eye has ever seen them, what ear has ever heard the rustle of their mystic wings, the "*vials*," or bowls they bear in their mystic hands, what eye has

seen them, and what hand has touched them? And yet these invisibilities from the invisible world produce an influence upon the material. Not only do sentient creatures from the earth, and the waters, and the air, writhe, and bleed, and die, but inanimate matter also. The earth quakes, the mountains tremble at their influence. Human science seems to be reaching a point when we shall find that human minds in all directions exert an influence upon the forces and the operations of material nature. Mind is the primordial and presiding force of all forces. Morally, like Jacob on his stony pillow at Bethel, we are all dreaming, unconscious of the presence of the Great Spirit. Ere long, however, we shall be wakened and exclaim, "Surely God is in this place and I knew it not."

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BELIEF NECESSARY TO MAN.—"A system of belief is, in fact, necessary for us as agents; no man was ever practically sceptical, for, as Montaigne says, if he were he could converse only in interrogatives."—Lord Chancellor HATHERLEY.

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Luke xxii. 32. (R. V.)

(For the Fourth Sunday after Easter.)

FROM SECOND LESSON.

"SOME one has been praying." So we once heard a famous medical man say as he noted the unexpected improvement in the symptoms of a patient whom he was attending. Some prayer he felt was the explanation of an increase of strength and hope which nothing else would account for. And since, as Tennyson well puts it, "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," we are justified often in saying and, perhaps, more often in silently feeling, concerning the unexpected improvement of health, the amelioration of domestic circumstances, or of national affairs, "Some one has been praying." And concerning the race, as we watch now the brave struggle after right of some individual, now the steady advance of some people, now the slow but sure progress of humanity as a whole, we may say, "Some One has been praying." That Some One is He who ever liveth to make intercession; He who here says to His servant, "Simon, Simon, I made supplica-

tion for thee." We may notice as suggested by the incident from whose record this passage is taken

I.—THAT INTERCESSION IS THE NOBLEST DEVELOPMENT OF PRAYER. Prayer has many developments. It utters itself in penitence, in the entreaty for personal good, in the expression of dependence, in the intercourse of trustful communion. But when it becomes intercessory it is forgetful of self, its eye has no narrow range, its heart no selfish pulsations. It is then most Christly. The prayer in the upper room, before the betrayal, that is much more accurately called the Lord's prayer than is the "*Pater Noster*," beautiful as that is for our constant use, was an intercessory prayer, the high-priestly prayer of our Lord. When we are interceding for man we are not merely like Aaron of old, but we are like and we are with the Eternal Christ who says, "I have made supplication for thee." All true prayer soon ripens into intercession, for in the conscious presence of God man cannot remain shrunken in sympathy and dwarfed in soul—he must expand and grow; that is, he must intercede.

II.—THAT INTERCESSION IS OFTEN URGENTLY NEEDED BY MAN. It was sorely needed by him for whom Jesus now made supplication, and it is needed by all. (1) *Because of the hostile influences from which they require to be delivered.* "Satan asked to have you." How tremendous a foe, "Satan." How terrible a catastrophe. To be "had" by Satan for "sifting" on his wild threshing-floor, where the flail is fierce as lightning, and where the winds are tornadoes. (2) *Because of the gift which they can receive through such intercessory prayer.* "That thy faith fail not." In the realm of spirit prayer is mighty. And in the realm of spirit nothing is of greater worth to troubled and tried man than "faith." Let our intercessions for man seek that their faith may not fail (a) in themselves, (b) in righteousness, (c) in others, (d) in God.

III.—THAT THE RESULT OF INTERCESSION, EVEN IF SUCH RESULT BE DELAYED, IS OF THE HIGHEST SERVICE TO MAN. The earnest, urgent, personal supplication of our Lord on behalf of Peter seems to be answered at once in its impulsive and hopeful response, "Lord, with Thee, I am ready to go both to prison and to death." But soon afterwards in his following afar off, in his denial, in his desertion, all traces of the result

of that intercession seem to have vanished. But only *seem*. The answer was there; the impressions were deepening; and in his penitential weeping, and, yet more, in his heroic after-life, when he became the rock-man his name signifies, there was full and complete answer to the Lord's intercession for him. See him at Pentecost, and after till his death, and you understand the deepest meaning of the saying, "Some One has been praying." So shall it be with our true intercessions for men.

EDITOR.

John xvi. 32.

(For the Fifth Sunday after Easter.)

FROM THE GOSPEL.

THESE words from the Saviour's great farewell to His disciples cannot fail to reach the deepest hearts of most men at some epoch in their lives. One is thankful as one ponders them to recal the inspired declaration about Jesus, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren," for there is here much that the Elder Brother endured not only for us but like us. Let us notice—

I.—THE LONELINESS THAT MUST BEFALL ALL MEN, EVEN AS IT BEFEL JESUS CHRIST. We speak of the loneliness that men know even as Christ knew; but we do not forget that beyond that there

was a solitariness in which He is unique and unapproached. The greater a man the intenser his loneliness, for he has fewer points of contact with ordinary humanity than the common low-thoughted mortal has. Hence the Highest that ever lived on earth must have been supremely solitary. But, nevertheless, there is much in human experience in which lonely men and women share the loneliness of Christ. Such loneliness arises of necessity, as Christ's words here indicate, or at least suggest, (1) from the *circumstances* of others. "Ye shall be scattered." What "scattering" there is by social advancement or failure; by travel; by emigration; by death. The forces of social life sunder as surely as they also for a time unite. Families are "scattered";

"They played in childhood side by side,
They filled one home with glee;
Their graves are scattered far and wide,
By stream, and mount, and sea."

So fellow students are "scattered"; companions in worship are "scattered." But the loneliness of men, like Christ's, arises also (2) from the *selfishness* of others. "Every man to his own." This habit of self-seeking and self-centring, causes the most painful loneliness in life. Men retire into their own sphere, revolve in their

own orbit, and leave you, it may be, in darkness, and chilliness, and solitude, in your own. Their "own" joys engage them, their "own" sorrows absorb them, their "own" purposes engross them, and if you are not of importance to them in relation to their joy, or sorrow, or purpose, you are left "alone," neglected, ignored, forgotten. Oh! the poignant anguish of feeling that one after another on whom you felt you had some claim of pity, if not of gratitude, are "all seeking their own," utterly heedless of your need, and almost of your existence. The unsuccessful have to feel this, and often the sick and incapacitated, and often the aged. Paul had to endure it, so had our Lord, so have most men. But we notice—

II.—THE COMMUNION BY WHICH SUCH LONELINESS CAN BE CONQUERED BY MEN EVEN AS IT WAS CONQUERED BY JESUS CHRIST. Well was it for Him when His social nature was stung by ingratitude, was wounded by desertion, was chilled by loneliness, that He could say "and yet." And well for us if we can use this same "and yet." What was His conquest? (1) *It was not by stoicism, but by a higher communion.* There was none of the spirit that gets hardened against emotion, that in cynical

mood learns to scoff at the sympathy it has lost. No! there is the social outflow, but in another direction; there is the human clinging, but to another object. "I am not alone." Another is with Him, if many are scattered and are seeking "their own." (2) *It was not by a vague sense of the Divine presence, but by filial intercourse with the Eternal Father.* "And yet the Father is with Me." A heart meets a heart, love meets love. The child is consciously with the parent. Then loneliness is impossible, solitude is swallowed up in the victory of love.

EDITOR.

John xiv. 15.

(For Whit Sunday.)

FROM THE GOSPEL.

"IF YE LOVE ME YE WILL KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS."

THIS short but unspeakably great sentence suggests for our consideration such truths as the following.

I.—THAT JESUS CHRIST CLAIMS FOR HIMSELF TO BE THE CENTRE OF MAN'S RELIGION. This sentence struck in the same key as all the distinctive teaching of our Lord. He who was the meekest and the lowliest does not shrink from sublime self-assertion, from majestic egoism. Here (1) *He claims*

man's love for Himself. (2) *He claims man's obedience to His commands.*

II.—THAT JESUS CHRIST SUGGESTS A HYPOTHESIS MOST BLESSED AND MOST MOURNFUL. "If." Why this "if"? (1) Because man *can love* Him, and in the love there is the loftiest possible life of the soul. Love is life; love of the Highest is the highest life. (2) Because some *do not love* Him, and in not loving Him is the strangest and saddest phase of human life. It has still to be said to millions of men, and to be said, alas! to multitudes of professing Christians, with an almost infinite uncertainty in the "if,"—"if ye love."

III.—THAT JESUS CHRIST INDICATES WHAT IS THE TRUE RESULT AND INDEX OF RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO HIM.

1. *Obedience to Him is a sure result of loving Him*; for the love of Him is the love of His character, His plans, His wishes. It is impossible to love Him and habitually to disobey.

2. *Obedience to Him is an index of man's loving Him.* Recital of creed, expressions of homage, utterance of worshipful sentiment, may, or may not, betoken love to Him. The daily doing of duty, difficult, obscure, ever recurring, out of regard for Him, is a sure sign of love to Him. EDITOR.

S. John xiv. 22-23.

(For Trinity Sunday.)

"MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD."

WE celebrate, to-day, the cardinal point of our faith, and yet its greatest mystery. Every part of our services to-day reminds us of the mystery of the Divine nature and of the operations of God. The Epistle, with its beautiful and striking figurative symbols expressive of the glories of the abode of the Deity; the Gospel, with its touching, natural, yet deep illustrations of mysterious, spiritual truths; the Lessons, setting forth glimpses of the Godhead; the Collect, the Creeds, the Preface in the Holy Communion, all carry our thoughts and hearts to the very heaven of heavens. But we do *not* see Him whom the heavens cannot contain. Amidst the voices that proceed from the throne we hear the words, "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? *Where* is God? Can He be known to us?" Look then at the text as containing truths specially appropriate to-day. The question here put to Christ implies a combination of ignorance and prejudice. The *style*, *subject*, and *spirit* of Christ's teaching were not understood by the early disciples. Observe the *mode* in which Christ treated the

question. It was asked one way, but answered another. So our Lord always treated questions of an objectionable spirit. *E. g.*, "Lord, are there few that shall be saved," &c. The question, however, if applied in a *spiritual* sense, is one of universal interest. God is only known by the *voluntary manifestation* of Himself. The most piercing intellect cannot find out God. (Cf. Job xxvi. 9-14.) This question amounts to an inquiry after that knowledge. It did not meet with an answer that satisfied the earthly curiosity of Judas, but one that satisfied the *practical* necessity of the case. Revelation is not designed to satisfy our intellectual doubts as to spiritual processes. Our understanding is too contracted to receive full satisfaction. *Space* and *time* place limits upon the mind. This present is a probationary state; sufficient knowledge is given to make duty binding.

I.—Note that CHRIST DISTINCTLY AFFIRMS THE GREAT FACT OF A PECULIAR MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE TO HIS TRUE SERVANTS. There are constant traces of God's presence in *nature*, &c. We see God shewing Himself and His thoughts in the springing verdure and gleaming worlds, &c. Is it, then, incredible that God, the Father of *spirits*, should have *peculiar* access to the

souls of His friends and servants?

We have such special communion with our friends, &c. "Thus saith the High and Lofty One," &c. Respecting this manifestation observe that (1) *It is mental*: spiritual, *i. e.* to the eye of the mind, not a splendour striking on the eye of flesh; a whisper to the ear of the understanding, not a voice of thunder. *Bodily senses* cannot see the Invisible Spirit. If God did reveal Himself in a material representation, "flesh and blood" could not stand before it [specify instances, *e. g.*, Moses, Manoah, &c.]. (2) *It is individual*. If a company of Christians are seeking the Divine manifestation, it will not be given to them with uniformity—*collectively*—but to each one separately. What follows? It may be made anywhere; wherever *mind* is there God can be made manifest: in the seclusion of the night, or the busy stir of the day; in the sanctuary, home, &c. (3) *It is to a prepared mind*. It is not a radiance like that which Moses saw; not like the pentecostal gleaming fires, but a heavenly glory perceived by the purified soul. "Blessed are the *pure* in heart," &c. (4) *It is composed of glorious elements*. Like the sunlight, composed of prismatic elements, &c. It is of *God*, as a Father and Friend! of *Christ*, as

a Saviour and Teacher! of the *Holy Spirit*, as Sanctifier and Comforter. In these glorious characters Jehovah becomes distinctly known and appreciated by the soul; in the importation of spiritual (a) *light*, (b) *life*, (c) *love*.

II.—CHRIST AFFIRMS THE LAW ON WHICH THIS MANIFESTATION DEPENDS. It demands (1) *Love to Christ* (verse 21). The words of Christ must be received. Words the key to His works. Here the supreme excellency of this manifestation appears. In the Old Testament it was by signs and symbols; *e. g.*, Jacob's vision, Elijah at Horeb, &c. These were proofs of Divine existence, but they did not change the heart; hence the Word of Truth, which is the vehicle of this unveiling of God, is another and far better thing. Hence arise two great effects: (a) *Humility*. Elijah was chafed and sad-hearted, &c., but when God revealed Himself the prophet saw his own littleness, &c. So of S. John. (b) *Withdrawal of the heart from the visible and sensible*. (2) *Obedience to Christ's law*. True love produces true obedience. There is an invariable and inseparable connexion between them. Even difficult obedience is made light by love.

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John iii. 13.

(For Trinity Sunday.)

"THE SON OF MAN WHICH IS IN
HEAVEN."

WE are told of one, Gratiano, that his conversation was like two bushels of chaff, in which after patient search you might find two grains of wheat. The family has vastly increased since Shakespeare's days and also sadly deteriorated. You may now search through their bushels—nay, tons of chaff—commonplace conversations, speeches, and sermons, without coming across even one grain of truth or fancy to reward you for your pains. Speech is valuable according to its weight, not according to its bulk. It should be judged by quality not quantity. Valued by the former standard, Christ's words leave all others far behind. They contain none of the chaff of commonplace. All is the wheat of truth, and that of the finest. Moreover, they are no mere logical propositions with fixed narrow meanings, but hints, suggestions, seeds of truth, which, if planted in the mind and carefully tended, will grow and bear much fruit. The twin truths in our short text are an illustration of the foregoing. Christ tells us two things—What He is and where He dwells.

I.—WHAT HE IS. (1) Our theology is like the pendulum, it usually swings from one extreme to another. For hundreds of years Christendom has exalted and magnified the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth—Son of God has been the Churches' favourite name for Him—His divinity the main article of her creeds. True and right; but this is not the whole truth. Jesus was man as well as God. He loved to call Himself Son of Man. And is there not good ground for saying that this complemental truth, without which the other becomes false, has been neglected and indeed is still but loosely held? Still while we seek to emphasise this truth let us be careful lest the pendulum, which already shows signs of moving, swing right over to the other side, and so we only give up one error for another. The remedy is not to think less of our Lord's divinity, but to think more of His humanity. (2) Jesus was a real man. His was not a human nature in which the limitations and weaknesses that belong to man were done away with by His Divine nature. He was a true man, touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He hungered, was weary, and was tempted as we are. His mind, too, was a human mind—He grew in wisdom, His knowledge was limited, *e.g.*,

He knew not the time of His second coming. (3) Our Lord is still man. There is a vague impression abroad that Christ *was* the God-man, but that *now* He is God only. Christ did not put on the robe of our humanity that He might doff it again when His earthly ministry was ended, but at the incarnation He became one with us, assuming our nature for ever. He remains man, therefore, though exalted to His throne at God's right hand. Our Mediator was fitted for His office not only by having lived our life but because He still lives it.

II.—WHERE HE DWELLS. Christ's words in our text evidently refer to the present, not to the future. All through the years of His ministry in Palestine, surrounded by the world's suffering and sin, our Lord tells us He was yet in heaven. Our ignorance is puzzled by this assertion, our common-sense offended. "How can these things be?" we cry with Nicodemus. Clearly if heaven be the happy hunting-ground, the place of material beauty and sensuous joy which the popular imagination looks forward to, there must be some mistake, for Jesus could not walk its golden streets, and the streets of Jerusalem, or the lanes of Galilee at one and the same time. But is the heaven of the

unthinking Christian, with its green fields, fragrant flowers, gushing fountains, golden harps, its music and song, the heaven of the Bible? No; for heaven is a state, not a place. Heaven is the sight of God, fellowship with Him, knowledge of the truth with all the soul-purity, rest, and joy that follows from this. Heaven is God, and God is everywhere. Here then is an explanation of this seeming contradiction—the Son of Man lived in heaven because He lived with God. What was true of our Saviour may be true of us. It is possible for every man to live in the world and do its work and yet be in heaven. For to be in heaven depends not on *where* we are but on *what* we are; it consists in the holiness, joy, and peace which come from communion with God; for this communion we have not to wait till after death. Heaven's gates are in this world, and they must be entered during this life. Who would not dwell in heaven now? All may enter. The door—the only one—is Christ. He can remove the guilt that makes our present hell, awaken the sleeping soul, recreate us again in the image of God, and, lo, we are in Paradise once more.

W. H. SKINNER.

BRISTOL.

Breviaries.

SHORT NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

(No. 15.) Unity between Christian People.

“FINALLY, BE YE ALL OF ONE MIND, HAVING COMPASSION ONE OF ANOTHER, LOVE AS BRETHREN, BE PITIFUL, BE COURTEOUS : NOT RENDERING EVIL FOR EVIL, OR RAILING FOR RAILING : BUT CONTRARIWISE BLESSING ; KNOWING THAT YE ARE THEREUNTO CALLED, THAT YE SHOULD INHERIT A BLESSING. FOR HE THAT WILL LOVE LIFE, AND SEE GOOD DAYS, LET HIM REFRAIN HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL, AND HIS LIPS THAT THEY SPEAK NO GUILE : LET HIM ESCHEW EVIL, AND DO GOOD ; LET HIM SEEK PEACE, AND ENSUE IT. FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE OVER THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ARE OPEN UNTO THEIR PRAYERS : BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THEM THAT DO EVIL.”—1 *Peter* iii. 8-12.

How well our Apostle learned the lesson of the Sermon on the Mount about Forgiveness. He seems to echo it here, “not rendering evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling ; but contrariwise blessing.” How deeply he drank in the spirit of the Lord’s Intercessory Prayer, “That they all may be one,” for he gathers up all his teaching about Christian social life in these strong words, “Finally, brethren, be ye all likeminded.” He enjoins in the passage now before us, in simple and homely detail, and yet from a sublime motive, “Unity between Christian people.” I.—WHEREIN DOES UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CONSIST? Archbishop Leighton suggests that St. Peter here describes five graces, of which love is the root or stalk, having two on either side, namely, on the one side *likemindedness* (not similarity of opinion, but of judgment, purpose, affection), and *compassionateness*,—or sympatheticness,—and on the other side *tenderheartedness*,—for insensitiveness disqualifies for Christian life, and *humblemindedness* (the old version renders it courtesy ; this is rather the secret and genius of courtesy ; the spirit that was in Paul, whom an old poet quaintly calls “the first true gentleman that ever breathed”). II.—HOW IS UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE MANIFESTED? Whether we take Peter’s own words, or his quotation from the 34th Psalm, we feel the tone of social relationship taught by the Spirit of God is much loftier than that which commonly prevails. *That* is, do not initiate wrong against a neighbour ; *this* is, do not retaliate, do not reciprocate wrong. By the injunction here are excluded (1) all *actions* of revenge. (2) All *words* of resentment, and the claim is for something altogether loftier,

“contrariwise blessing.” III.—WHAT IS THE METHOD FOR ATTAINING THIS UNITY? (1) There is a direction as to *detail of speech*. Refrain from (a) the *malicious*, “evil,” (b) the *false*, “guile.” (2) There is a deep and wide precept applying to *the whole of life*. He deals with the domain of action as he had before with the region of speech. “Turn away from evil and do good.” There is the suggestion that (a) evil confronts us and must be avoided, (b) good is an active, practical thing. “Do good things, not dream them all day long.” “Seek peace and pursue it.” There is the suggestion (a) that peace is a very blessed thing. So it is in human experience and in Divine relationships. (b) That this blessed thing needs striving after, for it eludes man, and its attainment demands purpose and energy. IV.—WHAT ARE THE MOTIVES FOR BEING ALL AND DOING ALL THAT WILL ENSURE THIS UNITY? (1) *The Christian man is called to inherit blessing*. Shall such an one as is heir of pardon, heaven, Christ’s love, be malign? (2) *The cultivation of the spirit that promoted social unity ensures the “summum bonum” of the individual life*. “Love life, see good days,” &c. (3) *Relationship to God is the great determining condition and motive in all that leads to true Christian unity*. (a) God knows what we are doing. His “eyes,” His “ears” involve that. (b) God cares for what we are doing. His ears open to the supplication of righteousness, His face “upon”—like an infinite frown—them that do evil. Perhaps Peter was recalling his Lord’s “look” upon him when he went out and wept bitterly.

EDITOR.

(No. 16.) The Wrongful Suffering of Good Men.

“AND WHO IS HE THAT WILL HARM YOU, IF YE BE FOLLOWERS OF THAT WHICH IS GOOD? BUT AND IF YE SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE, HAPPY ARE YE: AND BE NOT AFRAID OF THEIR TERROR, NEITHER BE TROUBLED; BUT SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS: AND BE READY ALWAYS TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH YOU A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR: HAVING A GOOD CONSCIENCE; THAT, WHEREAS THEY SPEAK EVIL OF YOU, AS OF EVILDOERS, THEY MAY BE ASHAMED THAT FALSELY ACCUSE YOUR GOOD CONVERSATION IN CHRIST. FOR IT IS BETTER, IF THE WILL OF GOD BE SO, THAT YE SUFFER FOR WELL DOING, THAN FOR EVIL DOING. FOR CHRIST ALSO HATH ONCE SUFFERED FOR SINS, THE JUST FOR THE UNJUST.”—1 *Peter* iii. 13-18.

HERE we have I.—THE FACT THAT GOOD MEN OFTEN SUFFER FOR THEIR GOODNESS FROM THEIR FELLOW MEN. Peter used the phrase “but and if,”

better rendered "nay and if," not because the suffering he describes is uncommon or infrequent, but because it may not be absolutely universal, and because the reflections on which he is dwelling might seem to have made such suffering impossible. For (1) It might seem as though the promised guardianship of God would have ensured security to good men. But, no. Or (2) It might have seemed that an upright, benevolent life would have won the gratitude and kindness of one's fellows. But, no. "If you would follow the Church in her history, it will be by the track of her blood; if you would see her, it is by the light of the fires in which her martyrs have been burned." II.—THE INSPIRED DIRECTION FOR MEN IN SUCH WRONGFUL SUFFERING. The words of Scripture, in the order here, speak of (1) *Fearlessness*. "Fear not," &c. (2) *Consecration to Christ*. "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord." (3) *Intelligent conviction*. "Be ready," &c. (4) *Conscientiousness*. "Having a good conscience." (5) *True triumph*. "Put to shame," &c. As Farrar puts it, "All may not be able to wield the sharp sword of argument, but you can wear the silver shield of innocent lives." III.—THE LOFTY PRIVILEGE OF THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE. (1) They are *blessed*. "Blessed are ye." Here again an echo that tells how attentively Peter listened to the Sermon on the Mount. (2) Their suffering is better than that of those who suffer for wrong doing. That is good, for by punishment the true Governor of men purifies. This is better, for it has no element of reproach, not to say of remorse. (3) Their suffering brings them into intimate fellowship with The Man of Sorrows. All His sufferings were such. For His goodness "He was despised and rejected of men." IV.—THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF MEN WHO IN THIS SPIRIT SUFFER WRONGFULLY BEING REALLY INJURED. "And who is he that will harm you," &c. Canon Mason points out that this form of enquiry has always in it a ring of scornful assurance. "And who, pray, is he that will harm you?" Here is "the charm" for a Christian to wear. Then to all wrongful treatment by the mean, or envious, or malicious, or persecuting men he can say, "Strike, you cannot harm." You may embarrass my circumstances, you may undermine my health, you may filch my reputation, you may shorten my mortal life, but you cannot "harm" *me*. Such a man, and there have been many,—

"Can the darkening universe defy
To quench his immortality,
Or shake his trust in God,"

EDITOR.

(No. 17.) The Mission of The Saviour.

"THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD, BEING PUT TO DEATH IN THE FLESH, BUT QUICKENED BY THE SPIRIT: BY WHICH ALSO HE WENT AND PREACHED UNTO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON; WHICH SOMETIME WERE DISOBEDIENT, WHEN ONCE THE LONGSUFFERING OF GOD WAITED IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, WHILE THE ARK WAS A PREPARING, WHEREIN FEW, THAT IS, EIGHT SOULS WERE SAVED BY WATER."—1 *Peter* iii. 18-20.

PASSING from the fellowship, in suffering and in service, which good men have with the Saviour, these verses somewhat suddenly open a view of *The Saviour's Mission*. They give us I.—The CHARACTER of the mission of The Saviour. (1) His mission was one that involved Him in *suffering*. Some object to Christianity because, say they, it is the Worship of Sorrow, and hence is morbid and melancholy in its influence. The element of truth in this error is that Christianity is the worship of One who more than any other had to do with sorrow. Tenderly, healingly, constantly He "took hold" of sorrow. The Despised Christ, the Weeping Jesus, the Bleeding Lord, the Dying Redeemer. (2) His mission was one of *innocent suffering*. "The righteous" many suffer wrongfully; He alone was utterly innocent. The consensus of the verdict of humanity is, "I find no fault in this Man." (3) His mission was one *unconquered by suffering*. "Put to death in the flesh, quickened in the spirit." That means complete victory. The scaffolding down; the house in majestic beauty stands. (4) His mission was one of *vicarious suffering*. "For the unrighteous." II.—The PURPOSE of the Saviour's mission. It is here condensed into one short description, "that He might bring us to God." This implying (1) *That we are away from God*. Not, of course, locally, but sympathetically. "Alienated." "Enmity." (2) *That we can be restored to God*. A great and golden word is the Gospel word "reconciliation." It tells of restoration to God (a) in *thought*, (b) in *will*, (c) in *resemblance*, and (d) in *filial fellowship and friendship*. (3) *That God Himself brings us back by Christ*. God always pitiful. "The longsuffering of God waited." Christ Himself is the gift of Divine love. III.—The EXTENT OF THE INFLUENCE of the Saviour's mission. The literature of this nineteenth verse is a library. Whatever else they teach they clearly widen and brighten our conception of the Saviour's mission, and they do this much to the horror of those who seem to think they honour Him by narrowing and darkening our conception of that mission. These words describe (1) *The mission of Christ's spirit at His death*. Killed in the

flesh, His spirit triumphed, and in its triumph it went on with its grand mission, a mission that seems wider and deeper than He had hitherto undertaken. (2) *The mission of Christ's spirit at His death was in harmony with that of all His life.* He is still pitiful, benevolent, still seeking to bring souls to God. Hence He "preached." Some, trifling with Scripture, change the word into "judged," sealed damnation, &c. But Peter says our Lord "preached," by which we understand, proclaimed love and mercy; called to repentance. (3) *The mission of Christ's spirit was to those who were in a state or place of misery.* "Spirits in prison." Dean Alford says "this throws a blessed light on one of the darkest enigmas of Divine justice." Those who were a sample of the worst of men, the sinners of Noah's days, untouched by Noah's warnings, are yet cared for by The Christ. The hour of Christ's death seems to have been a breaking of a new morning on the realms of the dead. The Redeemer cares for and works for the emancipation of incarcerated spirits wherever they are and wherever found. Shall His care and work be in vain? Can they? For (4) *The mission of Christ's spirit is of one as mighty as merciful.*

EDITOR.

(No. 18.) The Suffering Christ our Model and Hope.

"FORASMUCH THEN AS CHRIST HATH SUFFERED FOR US IN THE FLESH, ARM YOURSELVES LIKEWISE WITH THE SAME MIND: FOR HE THAT HATH SUFFERED IN THE FLESH HATH CEASED FROM SIN; THAT HE NO LONGER SHOULD LIVE THE REST OF HIS TIME IN THE FLESH TO THE LUSTS OF MEN, BUT TO THE WILL OF GOD."—1 *Peter* iv. 1, 2.

CONTINUING his study of the Saviour's mission, the apostle shows I.—Our Lord Jesus Christ SUFFERED IN HUMAN NATURE. By "the flesh" we find Scripture sometimes means our baser nature. But here and elsewhere it denotes our entire human nature, as when Christ is said to be "God manifest in the flesh." Jesus suffered *as man does*. II.—Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered in human nature IN A SPIRIT WE MUST CULTIVATE. "Arm yourselves with the same mind." By that we understand, thought, conception, spirit. Notice (1) *Contemplation* of Christ is good, but is not enough. (2) *Communion* with Christ is essential to the possession of His spirit. III.—The possession of this spirit which we are to cultivate WILL ENSURE COMPLETE DELIVERANCE FROM SIN. Suffer as Christ did. His crucifixion a parable as well as a fact. So is His

ascension. Rest like His is the outcome of suffering like His. IV.—THE OBLIGATION TO CULTIVATE THIS SPIRIT IS UNSPEAKABLY URGENT. The plea to “arm” is threefold. (1) *Christ’s sufferings, shall they be in vain?* (2) *Possible emancipation.* (3) *Conformity to God’s will.* EDITOR.

(No. 19.) Living to God’s Will.

“FOR THE TIME PAST OF OUR LIFE MAY SUFFICE US TO HAVE WROUGHT THE WILL OF THE GENTILES, WHEN WE WALKED IN LASCIVIOUSNESS, LUSTS, EXCESS OF WINE, REVELLINGS, BANQUETINGS, AND ABOMINABLE IDOLATRIES : WHEREIN THEY THINK IT STRANGE THAT YE RUN NOT WITH THEM TO THE SAME EXCESS OF RIOT, SPEAKING EVIL OF YOU : WHO SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT TO HIM THAT IS READY TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD. FOR FOR THIS CAUSE WAS THE GOSPEL PREACHED ALSO TO THEM THAT ARE DEAD, THAT THEY MIGHT BE JUDGED ACCORDING TO MEN IN THE FLESH, BUT LIVE ACCORDING TO GOD IN THE SPIRIT.”—1 *Peter* iv. 3-6.

THE key-note of this chapter is—“Live to the will of God.” I.—THIS IS THE LESSON OF MAN’S PAST EVIL LIFE. “The time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles.” There is irony here; deep sadness, yet deeper hope. SADNESS. Enough of sin. Because of its (1) *degradation to self*, (2) *injuriousness to others*, (3) *rebellion against God*. HOPE. (1) There is *forgiveness* for time past. (2) *Deliverance* from time past. The charm can be broken. Get away from it. Live to the will of God. II.—NOTWITHSTANDING BAD MEN’S WONDER AT GOOD MEN’S CONDUCT, what Peter said two thousand years ago is true to-day. Worldly men, sensual men, selfish men think it “strange” that others should be spiritual and generous, and often disbelieve it. Dissimilar characters often find it difficult to understand each other. The thoroughly corrupt man finds it impossible to understand the Christly man. (1) He thinks his conduct strange and so, *perhaps, ignores him altogether*. He does not invite him to his counsels, or carousals. (2) He thinks his conduct strange and *is aggravated by it*, or (3) He thinks his conduct strange and *it leads him to enquire*. This is the good effect. Live to the will of God, for III.—BOTH CHRIST’S JUDGMENT AND CHRIST’S GOSPEL ARE FOR ALL. (1) Christ’s judgment is for all. “Quick and dead.” Those now living, and “those who have died.” (2) Christ’s gospel is for all. If all are to be judged, all must have this gospel presented to them. This by every law of justice, every claim of love. “To this end,” &c. The cross of Christ is as stupendous as the great white throne. Either in their “life in the flesh”

here, or in their life "in the spirit" elsewhere, they must come into contact with this gospel. The purpose being that they may "live unto God."

EDITOR.

(No. 20.) A Solemn Fact and an Urgent Duty.

(For the Sunday after Ascension.)

FROM THE EPISTLE.

"BUT THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND: BE YE THEREFORE SOBER, AND WATCH UNTO PRAYER. AND ABOVE ALL THINGS HAVE FERVENT CHARITY AMONG YOURSELVES: FOR CHARITY SHALL COVER THE MULTITUDE OF SINS."—1 *Peter* iv. 7, 8.

HERE we note I.—THE PREDICTION OF A SOLEMN FACT. "The end of all things is at hand." There are, as every student of the New Testament epistles knows, great diversities of opinion as to the aspect of the transitoriness of all things on which Peter was now dwelling, and from which he was enforcing great lessons. Whether the apostle was expecting a near termination of human history, or an approaching "end of the age," the impression produced on his mind was the same, namely, we are all "sojourners," "all flesh is grass," &c. To us, as to him, specially the old man he was when he wrote this, "the end of all things is at hand." In persons, homes, institutions, nations, are the elements of decay. II.—THE CONSEQUENT CALL TO THE HIGHEST PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DUTY. The thought of the termination of man's connection with all things about him produces different impressions on different minds, *e.g.*, Epicurean, Stoic, Christian. Here is the true impression. (1) *Personal*. "Be of sound mind, be sober unto prayer." An *echo* of what Peter had heard from his Lord on the last evening of His life, and in His discourses on the two great days of judgment. A *memory* that must have saddened him, for there was "one hour" in which he ought to have watched that he would give worlds to have back again. "*Sound mind*," not volatile, fickle, impulsive, fanatic. "*Sober*," covering all self-mastery, free from intoxication of all kinds, whether the inordinate excitement of appetite, or avarice, or ambition. "*Unto prayer*." This the point to be touched; the focus through which all life shall pass; the true concert-pitch of all its utterances. (2) *Social*. "Above all things." Love the crowning and all-comprehending duty. (a) The *character* of the love enjoined. "Fervent,"—*i.e.*, intense, cordial, unwearied. (b) The *effect* of the love enjoined. "Covereth." (1) *Overlooks*. (2) *Puts best construction*. (3) *Forgives*. (4) *Prevents by not provoking*.

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

FELLOWSHIP.*

The subject upon which I desire to offer some observations in the Address which it has become the custom to deliver on such occasions as the present, is FELLOWSHIP. In selecting such a subject I ought, perhaps, to apologise for its *elementary* character. But my justification is, that it is a vitally important and far-reaching subject, which I must crave your indulgence for handling in the fragmentary manner which only is possible to me. Of course, I alone am responsible for the sentiments about to be uttered, and for the manner in which they shall be presented. May the fellowship of the HOLY SPIRIT be consciously with us. *Fellowship!*—it is the fondest aspiration of our social and spiritual life; *fellowship!* it is the synonym for our name as one of the brigades of Christ's army; *fellowship!* it is the watchword of the incoming age; *fellowship!* it is the finishing touch in the ideal of humanity; *fellowship!* it is the law of the universe; *fellowship!* it is the promise of eternity; *fellowship!* it is the infinite necessity of God.

I.—In considering our subject—*Fellowship*, we take as our guide the New Testament term, *Koinōnia*, as conveying the Divine conception of fellowship, and the Divine standard for its manifestations. It will, therefore, be our duty to enquire what the use of the term in the New Testament is. But before doing so, it will be interesting to notice that *koinōnia*, like *agape* (love); *ekklesia* (church); *stauros* (cross); *paideia* (chastisement); *parrhesia* (boldness); and many other leading words may be regarded, so to speak, as one of the technical terms, or key-words, of the New Testament. Many of them were in ordinary use in the Greek language before, but were lifted up by the Holy Spirit in the apostles to a higher level of meaning, and were consecrated to the specific purpose of meeting the deeper and Diviner needs of the new mental and spiritual age then dawning upon the world. Let us quote from our English Testament some of the passages where *Koinōnia*, or one of its cognates, occurs, giving the references first. Acts iv. 32.—“They had all things *common*. Rom. xii. 13.—“*Distributing* to the necessities of saints.” Rom. xv. 27.—“*Partakers* of their spiritual things.” Gal. vi. 6.—“Let

* Being the Address delivered by Rev. Joseph Morris as Chairman to the Annual Assembly of the Devonshire Congregational Union, 1885.

him that is taught in the word *communicate* unto him that teacheth in all good things." Phil. iv. 14.—"Howbeit ye did well that ye had *fellowship* with my affliction. (*R.V.*) 1 Peter iv. 13.—"Insomuch as ye are *partakers* of Christ's sufferings, rejoice." 1 Cor. i. 9.—"Called to the *fellowship* of His Son." 1 Cor. x. 16.—"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a *communion* of the body of Christ? Have not they which eat of the sacrifice *communion* with the altar?" Gal. ii. 9.—"James and Cephas gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of *fellowship*." Luke xv. 10.—"James and John were *partners* with Simon." 2 Cor. viii. 23.—"Titus . . . he is my *partner*." Philemon 17.—"If, therefore, thou countest me a *partner*, receive him as myself." 1 Peter v. 1.—"A fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who also am a *partaker* of the glory that shall be revealed." 2 Cor. vi. 14.—"What *communion* hath light with darkness. (In this passage the apostle employs other terms of rich explanatory force in association with *koinōnia*). 1 Cor. xii., is an enlarged exposition of the apostle's idea of *koinōnia*, under the figure of the body and its members—which we have also vividly presented by our Lord Himself in John xv., under the figure of the vine and its branches. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.—"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the *communion* of the Holy Ghost be with you all." It is significant that the adjective *koinos* (common) has a *bad* as well as a good use in the sense of *defiled*. "Peter, Peter, rise: kill and eat." "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is *common*, or (*a kathartos*) unclean;—a very significant application of *koinos*, shewing the carnal, exclusive nature of the dispensation by Moses. That use has not yet quite died out. The common is still regarded by some as at least frequently synonymous with the unclean. Comparing these several passages we are in a position to gather what is the force of the term *koinōnia*. One more passage must be quoted, it is the passage which more than any other leads us into the Divine fulness of *koinōnia*. I refer to 1 John i. 3 (see the context), "That which we have seen and heard," of the Eternal Word made flesh, "declare we unto you also, that ye also may have *fellowship* (*koinōnia*) with us; yea, and our *koinōnia* is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

II.—The sum of the witness of the New Testament respecting Fellowship then is this. It means *partnership, participation, friendship, mutual sympathy, mutual sacrifice, equality, co-operation, LOVE*. Flowing down from God, its eternal source, it is wholly good and for beneficent and

holy purposes. In its theological bearings it implies that the Word, who was the effulgence of the glory of God, and the very image of His substance, took our flesh and blood into union with Himself, and became *partaker* of it in order that He might redeem man from the power of evil under which he had fallen, and restore him into *fellowship* with Himself and with God. *We* are made through faith in His precious blood, which is the seal of fellowship, and by the indwelling Spirit of Jesus, *partakers* of a *Divine nature*; we are admitted into *partnership* with God and with His Son. *We share* holiness, sympathy, service, power, glory with God Himself. We have *communion* with God. This is our *Fellowship* with Him. It is full of joy, it is restful, holy, victorious by virtue of our co-partnership with the Eternal. This *Fellowship* it is our privilege and duty to extend. It embraces our brethren. It is a *leaven* that is to leaven the whole lump of humanity. It is to bring redeemed men into closest bonds of an everlasting unity. It is to bless the whole world.

III.—This glorious *Fellowship* thus briefly presented in its *nature* let us consider.

In its embodiment (1) Fellowship, in the first instance, is a personal participation of a Divine nature; a personal *co-partnership* with God. This aspect of it is emphasised in theology. Religion is a personal matter. Upon this truth is founded the sacredness of conscience and the right of private judgment, which was disentombed at the Reformation and reared by the Puritans into a mighty and glorious Temple for God, and a magnificent palace for the State. It is the designation emblazoned upon our own older banner, as "*Independency*." (2) But Fellowship has a wider aspect. It is social. The personal communion with God does not exhaust it. The liberty of personal Fellowship has its necessary and social conditions and limits. Rights and privileges have their incumbent duties. Fellowship is a centrifugal as well as a centripetal force: "That they all may be one." "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring." "All that believed were together and had all things *common*." "Go ye into all the *world* and preach the Gospel to every creature." (3) The apostle John, when he wrote that first epistle, seemed to dwell mainly in the contemplation of the personal fellowship of believers with God and with the godly. His brother Paul, on the other hand, delighted to dwell upon the world-wide aspect of the same Fellowship—He was ambitious "to make *all* men see what is the Fellowship of the mystery"; both derived their knowledge of it from the one world-embracing Master. (4) During the existence of the Theocracy,

Fellowship was embodied in the combined church and nation of Israel. But the glory, like the shining of Moses' face, faded away. But the prophets of its decline were all aglow with a prevision permitted to them of an universal brotherhood of men under the reign of The Christ. An elect remnant transmitted the sacred fire down to the days of Jesus. It survived in the family, it is transmitted through the *family* still. A God-fearing, Christ-loving, *family* contains within it all the conditions and the requirements for giving scope to all the duties and the privileges of Fellowship. It must begin in the home. (5) It is embodied in the Church. Christ foresaw and arranged that individual partakers of His Fellowship should obey their social instincts, and must seek the sympathy of their fellows; that they would assemble together and act by sympathy and instruction upon their neighbours and connections in an ever widening circle. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The *apostles* were the *nucleus* of the *koinōnia* of the day of Pentecost. "They that received Peter's word were baptized, and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and Fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer. We believe that at the present time the *Free Churches* are best adapted for the full play of *koinōnia*, being, as we consider, nearest to the apostolic model, most elastic yet strong in their methods as vehicles of the living spirit, and most capable of comprehending, not only the *depth and height* but also the *length and breadth* of the love of Christ. Because of its systematic and more rigid *government*, indeed some of us may sometimes be turning a wistful look towards *Presbyterianism*, because of its *love feasts* and its *class meetings*, some of us may covet *Wesleyan Methodism*, with its buoyant practical energy, and its care that every member in the connection shall have his own work to do, because of its *parochial system* some of us may envy the *Church by law established*, with its Christian year of Divine service, its dignity and its culture; although in the latter attribute, at any rate since the throwing open of the Universities, Nonconformists have a chance of being on a par with it. And we are, it must be confessed, sometimes exposed, because of our *freedom*, to hear taunts (unfounded in the main) as to the heterodoxy of our teachers, or the laxity and heterogeneousness of our modes of worship or discipline; but granting that there may be sometimes ground, under the strain which our polity has to bear, for a momentary leaning towards other conditions of things than our own; or sometimes ground for the imputations of

those whose polity differs from our own, we maintain—most tenaciously maintain—that if *liberty* is to be held with *order*, if *moral suasion* is to prevail conjointly with *authority*, if *respectability* (I hate the word) is to appear side by side with *popularity*, if *Love* is the strongest bond of union and the most potent transforming influence, if, in short, *Humanity* is the circumference of the circle of which Christ is the centre, then we, as Congregationalists, can hold our own and may claim a place in the front ranks of the promoters of the Christian fellowship and of the regeneration of the world. (6) If this be so, brethren, it is for us to test and apply to the utmost all the powers of Fellowship which we so richly possess. We are *stewards* of this mystery. Where should we stand if called to-day to give *account* of our stewardship? Let us ask ourselves a few pointed questions.

Could not our *family life* be more of a true Fellowship than it is? Could we not, as *pastors*, embody its spirit more manifestly in its twofold aspect of intimate communion and co-partnership with God, so that our faces shone as we came down from the mount (alas! how little opportunity for such communion in these busy days), and also of communion and co-partnership with His people? Could not *pastors*, with *pastors*, hold closer, more confiding Fellowship in reference to the methods and the difficulties of our work? Could not the relationship between pastors and their deacons, and pastors and the evangelists be assimilated to a more perfect Fellowship? Could not the bond between the Church and its dependent institutions, such as the Sunday school and the Band of Hope, be drawn closer?

And as to our *worship*—does our Sunday worship partake as much as it might do of the nature of *Fellowship* in prayer and praise and the exaltation of Christ? We attach the most sacred importance to that part of the service specially designated *the Communion*. Might that ordinance not be even more than it is a Fellowship with our blessed Lord and with one another? While eschewing a superstitious observance of the holy feast, and keeping as far aloof from sacerdotalism as the east is from the west, by a more thoughtful preparation for it, and by the constant flow of love through all our lives, might it not be more frequently a season of the manifestation of Jesus to us, when He might almost be heard to say, "Lo! I am with you."

Fellowship manifested itself from the very first in the primitive Church as care for the poor. The primitive Church indeed, anticipated some of the broadest, most advanced theories of property and social

life which are advocated in the present day, but in how different a spirit. Our *poor* are not neglected; but are they cared for with that tender affection due to them as Christ's special legacy to His Church? Might not rich deacons, or rich members sometimes be more humble, and modest, and liberal; and poorer deacons and members, rich in faith, be brought more to the front? Would it not be for the soul's health of some rich hearers, with gold ring and goodly apparel, to be satisfied to receive only the amount of attention the Master would be likely to bestow upon them? The spirit of Fellowship would make us real and bold in all these matters. How much of Fellowship is there in our Church meetings? Do our social tea-meetings much resemble in their spirit the primitive *love feasts*? May there not be more of fellow-feeling among us in dealing with backsliders and neglecters of the ordinances—can such not sometimes justly complain—"No man careth for my soul"? Could we not with advantage attach less importance to our Church and our Chapel and more to our spirit—when shall we attain to the experience of Monod's hymn—

"None of *self*, and all of *THEE*."

IV.—We sustain intimate relations with other Churches of our own order. According to our constitution each Church subsists, not in superiority over, or subserviency to any other Church, but in *Fellowship* with it. Other Churches are—sweet designation—"sister Churches." They are the equals of *our* Church, ours the equal of them. To illustrate the application of Fellowship among the associated Churches:—(1) Outbreaks of irregularity may occur, or pastors become unsettled, or Churches become dissatisfied or vacant, or pastors wish for another sphere, or students require pastoral settlements. These are delicate circumstances in which to interfere *from the outside*, where interference is without constitutional sanction; but these are the very circumstances in which true mutual Fellowship would render it both possible and welcome to interpose with wise and kind advice and practical assistance. (2) The great scheme for raising our denominational standard of giving and distributing money, known as the "Church Aid" scheme, which is of national importance, probably requires revision. At any rate it is far from accomplishing its contemplated purpose, while it must be admitted that the spirit of systematic giving has, in some quarters, been stirred up by it. But some Churches need to be reminded that they are doing nothing for the Fund, others that they are subscribing only the minimum required

by our rules. The subject will be emphasised in the Report. No doubt there is a painful prevalence of commercial depression which accounts in a measure for the scantiness of the contributions given to its funds, but it is to be feared that the deficiency arises from the lack of *koinōnia* among us, from the lack of interest on the part of individuals in the general welfare ; a lack of sympathy on the part of the stronger with the weaker members of the body, which it was the special object of the "Church Aid" scheme to promote. Our organizations are bewildering, and paradoxical as the suggestion may appear, we may have to invoke Fellowship to step into our Church garden and weed out a good many of them, and more assiduously tend those that shall be deemed worthy to remain. (3) We need more of the spirit of Fellowship in some of our Churches towards *young people* in whose hearts there is some good thing towards the Lord Jesus, to take them and the children by the hand ; to converse personally with them about their spiritual interests, and to give some work to do to those who are willing to work. Our reports show how much of our Sunday school work and Temperance work is done by young people, and how many children are cheerful and efficient collectors to our various operations. (4) Students need more sympathy and appreciation. Raw and inexperienced many of them must be, they are only putting on the armour to win noble battles for Christ when many of us shall have laid down our arms.

V.—The circle of Fellowship still widens. There are Churches beyond our own borders with which as acknowledging Christ it is our desire and duty to be in Fellowship.

"Let all the saints terrestrial sing
With those to glory gone ;
For all the servants of our King
On earth and heaven are one.

"One family we dwell in Him ;
One church above, beneath ;
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death."

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches" ; "That they all may be one, as we are." The servants of Christ may differ from each other, they may wear a different garb ; they have different work assigned to them ; all are not the eye, or the ear, or the foot, or the hand, but in all the diversity of gifts, and operations, and organizations too, "worketh that one and the self-same spirit dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the

body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ." Some Churches, as some individuals, exhibit and emphasise some special feature of the character of the Master, all combined exhibit it only too imperfectly. Let this be the rivalry among His disciples, who shall most resemble Him ; and among the Churches, which shall best fulfil the desire of His great and loving heart. Let our tendency be not to isolation into our own little corners, but to Fellowship under the open sky, with all who honour Christ, whatever be their name or sign. *They* have something to teach *us* which it may be well for *us* to learn ; *we* may teach them something which it may be for the common weal for *them* to embody. Were this principle kept in view the world would once more exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another."

Let us hail with grateful hearts every indication of the giving way, in whatever direction, of old prejudices, and cordially reciprocate every sign of willingness to overstep, sometimes at the cost of great sacrifices, prescribed lines of separation in order to the fulfilment of the Lord's petition "that they all may be one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me."

VI.—We must just touch, and only touch, the circle of a still wider Fellowship—the *WORLD*, without the inclusion of which our conception of the Divine idea of *Fellowship* would be lamentably imperfect. I do not dwell here upon the Evangelistic work of the Church. The importance of this, so powerfully dwelt on in the sermon last night, is practically acknowledged. The Good Shepherd came to save a lost *world*. The field is the *world*. The kingdoms of this *world* are to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Christians have sometimes been too exclusively *spiritual*, and have let the world outside rush into ruin ; too delicate and fastidious to touch the publicans and lepers of society ; too absorbed in delicious dreams of a *future* Heaven to realise that the will of God is to be done on *earth*. That state of things, however, is rapidly passing away. By the ties of kindred with our common nature ; by the cries of degraded and oppressed millions ; by the fluctuations of commerce ; by the facilities and aspirations of advancing civilization ; by the breaking up of old systems ; by the upheavings and threats of revolution and anarchy ; by the extension of political liberty ; by the former triumphs of the Cross ; by the trumpet-summons of our Divine Commander riding grandly upon the apocalyptic white horse at our head, we must, we will contribute to the wider Fellowship of the future. Such enlightened

writings as, "Contemporary Socialism," by John Rae; "Christ and Democracy," by Rev. C. W. Stubbs; "The World Subject to Redemption," "The Bampton Lecture for 1883," by Canon Fremantle; and a sterling little book—"The Battle and the Burden of Life," by our own Baldwin Brown, one of the truest of men, among other works contain much that is instructive and stimulating for us at the present time. I had marked several passages for quotation, but must lay them aside. Our own Body has taken a noble part in the work of social amelioration following on the lines of the London City Mission in the east-end, where Edward Denison so prematurely died. Let us follow in their train. We are looking forward to the disestablishment of the Church of England, now acknowledged to be, as a *National Church*, a *failure*. What guarantee are we prepared to give that the large funds then disengaged to be diverted to other channels, shall be more wisely administered; and that the *nation* will be bettered? We need a reformation in the levy of taxation, in our land laws, in the relations of capital and labour. *Political economy*, with her hard utilitarian theories, is mainly at work in these directions. The muscles, and sinews, and brain, and the implements of labour of the operative are pitted, as in a pitched contest, against the giant, Capital—but the David of *Manhood* will win the day! *Communism*, selfish to the core, but wearing the mask of equality, is stepping in with her delusive panacea; yes, *Atheism*, which is never likely to be the acknowledged creed of the working-men of England, with unblushing effrontery proclaims herself the Saviour of society; while, creeping stealthily in her weird shadow, is Anarchy, in the form of Fenianism and Nihilism, her mouth full of bitterness and cursing, her hands red with blood, her heart set on fire of hell. Perhaps there is need of some terrible Elijah to rebuke us; some are earnestly expecting the Lord Himself speedily to appear, to save His Church and chastise His enemies, but His own provision of *Koinōnia* is yet untried, or most feebly tried, to the full, and *we* have confidence that if tried it would be sufficient; it would turn the world's wilderness into a garden of God. Let the rich oppress the poor never more; let capital tyrannise over labour never more; let luxurious tastes and customs be countenanced never more; let money be the measure of the man, and self reign never more, and then what would the result be? Mr. Gladstone, God be with him! has lately described, in his own felicitous way, what will be the effect of the probable indefinite extension of the English-speaking people; but what would be the effect of the universal diffusion

of the Fellowship of which we speak? In the name of Fellowship and of our Divine *Koinōnos*, our Head and Co-partner, we wish success to our little Union. Seen in the mirror of the *map*, we are dotted down in very various and diverse positions, some advantageous, many very disadvantageous; seen in the mirror of the *daily newspaper* we are, whether in town or hamlet, labouring in the midst of the living tragedy or comedy of the world; called to take part in the political stir of the time, suffering or rejoicing through agricultural and commercial prosperity or depression, bearing the burdens of the living, lamenting the dead; seen in the mirror of our *Report*, to be presented to us this morning, we are many workers, including valuable lady-helpers—one being the first woman *Delegate* appointed to our Assembly present to-day, and loving children who assist us by collecting and by their sympathy in many ways. And it must be thankfully acknowledged that there is a very large amount of doing and giving in our various congregations which never can appear in the Report. Success—abundant success to all.

And I will wish also in your name success to all true Fellowship all over the world; success to every form of social amelioration all over the world; success to social purity all over the world; success to the abolition of slavery all over the world; success to free trade all over the world; success to the liberation of religion from state patronage and control all over the world; success to thorough education, to true science and art all over the world; success to arbitration in the place of war all over the world; success to an enlightened, pure literature all over the world; success to liberal and righteous government all over the world; success to the preaching of the evangel of free salvation all over the world; success to the reign of The Christ all over the world and through all the ages. “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, heard I saying: Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.”—Amen.

Reviews.

IN FREEDOM'S CAUSE; A STORY OF WALLACE AND BRUCE. By G. A. HENTY. London: Blackie and Sons, 49, Old Bailey.

We give the following extract from the able and well-known author's preface:—"There are few figures in history who have individually exerted so great an influence upon events as William Wallace and Robert Bruce. It was to the extraordinary personal courage, indomitable perseverance, and immense energy of these two men that Scotland owed her freedom from English domination. So surprising were the traditions of the feats performed by these heroes that it was at one time the fashion to treat them as belonging as purely to legend as the feats of St. George or King Arthur. Careful investigation has, however, shown that, so far from being the case, almost every deed reported to have been performed by them is verified by contemporary historians. Wallace was a high-minded and noble patriot. Throughout this tale, therefore, wherein it relates to Wallace and Bruce, the circumstances and events can be relied upon as strictly accurate." The hero of this interesting tale fought under both Wallace and Bruce, and we have in it accounts of many hair-breadth escapes and wild adventures. Boys will read this book with great delight.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D.D. Tenth Thousand. London: "Christian Life" Publishing Company, Strand.

We are not a little delighted at receiving this matchless volume, containing all the works of an author who has exerted a more quickening and ennobling influence on minds of the higher mould in all thinking and reading circles than any other man. Soon after leaving College more than, forty years ago, we came under the influence of this master-soul, who soon produced a recoil in our minds from the narrow Calvinism of what are called orthodox Churches, and from the pedantic utterances of little gold-fingered preachers. By the way, we had hoped that such hideous specimens of vanity had died out, until last Sunday evening, a lady returning from an Independent Chapel said she had been hearing a white-headed old man who displayed his gold ringed finger and stroked with unbounded complaisance his snowy beard. Ah me! No wonder that pulpits are becoming effete.

The Christianity of Dr. Channing was no theory, it was in him a life stirring all the great faculties of his noble mind, and setting them to work, not for sects, but for souls, not for any party views or interests, but for the all-embracing good of man as man. All his ideas seem instinct with life,

and his utterances as fresh as the breath of the morning. We have just revived our impressions of him by reading his article on "*The Crime and Miseries of War*." Antecedently it would be supposed that every man who pretended to preach the Gospel, and to be a follower of the "Prince of Peace," would take every opportunity of inculcating the principles of peace as preached by Christ in His Sermon on the Mount and exemplified in His life and in His death. But how awfully amazing it is to find that at this period when the devil of war runs riot almost everywhere, Bradlaugh and his followers, and not professed preachers of the Gospel, are the men who are found standing up and hurling anathemas against its abettors. The Church, intended by Christ to be a grand "Peace Society," has become the chief patron of bloody war. Its Archbishops compose prayers for the success of the wretches engaged in the shedding of blood, and its Bishops consecrate the banners and deliver orations in honour of triumphant murderers. Whilst a few Nonconformist ministers may, here and there, utter their protests, the great majority in all sections appear too feeble in intelligence, conscience, and courage to offer the slightest resistance to the stream of opinion in favour of war, a stream which is created and nourished by hollow statesmen, manufacturers of armour, military merchants, and bloated aristocrats who seek for their sons an office that will not only give them an income enabling them to luxuriate in voluptuous idleness, but a position also which attracts the admiration of those fools in the kingdom who attach the idea of glory and renown to such an execrable profession. Although we may not agree with every opinion put forth by Dr. Channing, we would sooner that the young men of England should give their attention to the study of this book than to the study of any other single volume that has ever fallen into our hands. It is a work for turning bipeds into men.

THE TABLE TALK AND OMNIANA OF SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.
Arranged and Edited by T. ASHE, B.A. London: George Bell and Sons, York Street, Covent Garden.

The following extract from the Editor's preface will give our readers an idea of the character and nature of this work. "Our volume comprises Coleridge's 'Table Talk,' edited by his son-in-law in 1835, and the 'Omnia' of the first volume (published in 1836) of 'The Literary Remains of S. T. Coleridge,' by the same editor, which includes Coleridge's contributions to Southey's *Omnia* of 1812. To the former we have been able to add some 'Additional Table Talk,' extracted from Allsopp's 'Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge,' 1836, by the kind permission of Allsopp's representatives, and to the latter some

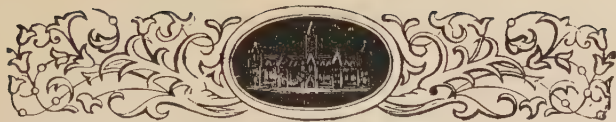
manuscript notes, made by Coleridge in 1819, in a copy of Southey's publications now in the British Museum." This volume contains a vast variety of subjects, on which one of the ablest minds and greatest talkers of this age gave utterance. Such subjects as—"The Character of Othello, Schiller, Scotch Novels, Lord Byron, Kemble, Parliamentary Privilege, Kant, Materialism, Ghosts, Plato, Goldsmith, Snuff, Rogues, St. John's Gospel, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Canning, National Debt, Church of Rome, Pantheism, Zendavesta, Marriage, Blumenbach and Kant's Races, Solomon, Jewish History, Spenser, Hamlet, William III., Berkeley, Ariosto and Tasso, Hooker, Plants, Insects, Dogs, The Book of Job, Ezekiel, Milton, Homer, &c., &c. The name of the distinguished author will, of course, insure for this volume, what its merits demand, an extensive circulation.

NATURE'S HYGIENE. A Systematic Manual of Natural Hygiene. By C. T. KINGZETT, F.L.C., F.C.S. London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, King William Street, Strand.

The learned author informs us that since the second edition of this volume he has found it necessary, in consequence of the general attention that has been given to the subject, to re-write the greater part of it and to add several new chapters. This edition, therefore, is in several respects superior to the first. The subjects here treated are—"The Constitution of Matter, Chemical Elements, Chemical Compounds, Law of Combining Proportions, Synthesis and Decompositions, Symbols, Formulae, Reactions and Equations, Oxygen, Ozone, Nitrogen, Carbonic Dioxide, Hydrogen, Water, Peroxide of Hydrogen, Chemistry of the Atmosphere, Respiration, Ventilation, Oxidation, Physiological Combustion, Natural Decay, Water Supply, Infectants, Theories of Disease, Antiseptics, Malarial Fever, Essential Oils, Sanitas, Pine and Eucalyptus Forests," &c. This is a most admirable work on a subject that is becoming every day more interesting and important.

MEDITATIONS FOR ADVENT. Short Readings on the First and Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. By DANIEL MOORE, M.A. London: Hatchards, Piccadilly.

The reader who wishes to be startled by originality, or to be drawn into paths of thought leading to broad and breezy commons, where stereotyped creeds and conventional Churches dwindle into insignificance, need not purchase this book. But those whose traditional faith is crystallised and who have no appetite for anything fresh in soul dietetics will perhaps enjoy these Evangelical lullabies.



The
Leading Homily.

THE HOPE OF PERSONAL IMMORTALITY.

“A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL NOT SEE ME: AND AGAIN, A LITTLE WHILE, AND YE SHALL SEE ME, BECAUSE I GO TO THE FATHER. . . . I CAME FORTH FROM THE FATHER, AND AM COME INTO THE WORLD: AGAIN, I LEAVE THE WORLD AND GO TO THE FATHER.”—*John xvi. 16-28.*

AMONG the beautiful and tender scenes in the life of Christ, there is none more beautiful and tender than His farewell intercourse with the disciples in the paschal chamber. He had told them that in a few hours He must die. So startling had been these tidings to them—for now, for the first time, they believed that His death was at hand—that they were filled with blank amazement and helpless sorrow. It was a dark hour to them. Of His kingdom on which He had dwelt so long, of their own hopes of it which had supported them and kept them close to Him for so many months of His ministry, nothing, it seemed, was left. Of all the ideals of the years when in early joy they had united their fortunes to His, not one, as they thought, but was destroyed. Then His life with them, its friendship, its

teaching, the voice that had been music to their ears, the smile that had charmed them when weary, the patience that had never once broken down over their dulness and false notions of greatness, the grace and truth of His character that had exercised so ineffable an attraction over them—all was soon to be like a vanished dream, and they were to be left cold with the coldness of heart-loneliness and orphanhood.

But with sublime self-forgetfulness the Master made their sorrow His own. He forgot His death, forgot or put aside the pain of body and mind He had yet to bear, and gave himself up to the task of comforting, teaching, exalting them; although He knew that when the hour of danger came they would all forsake Him and flee away. Never had He unfolded His heart to them as He did in that hour. Never had His words been so tender and soothing in sympathy, or the truths He revealed so purely adapted for kindling hope and strength in their spirits as then. This was in harmony with the spirit of all His life. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He came not to think about Himself, but to think about others. The law of self-forgetting love under which Christ placed Himself was a law which He never once broke; it was a law which He never once forgot. Wherever He was found, He was there for the good of others; whatever He did, He did to bless others. Can you point to a single word that He spoke, or a single action that He did, and say, "in this Christ was thinking of Himself,—His own enrichment, His own happiness, His own glory"? The idea of such a motive is, we feel, one that we at once shrink from, it is so absolutely untrue to Him. The spirit of Christ was self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, and its Divine radiance and beauty shone forth towards His disciples on the eve of His passion and death.

Now one great element—perhaps the greatest element—in the comfort which Christ gave His sorrow-stricken disciples in that hour, was the Revelation of Immortality: the Immortality of Himself, and, therefore, of them and of humanity.

He was going to the Father from whom He had come: going

through death to a higher life, in which He would not be less, but more, the King of men and the Saviour of the world. He could not speak of going to the grave. That would convey a false impression about Himself and, therefore, about them. He had not come from the grave. That had not been His original home, and it was to His original home that He was going. There was in reality only one way of describing the event that was so soon to take place—He was going to the Father's house. Death was nothing to Him, save a brief passage of pain: an exodus, a going-out from a land of conflict and sorrow and labour into an eternal realm of unbroken joy and rest, as the fruit of finished work. He would be their Lord and Master, their Teacher and Friend, their Example and Light, after death had taken Him from them, even as He was when visibly on earth. Into that Divine and loving life which is beyond this world, Jesus, our Master, knew that He would rise, the conqueror of death and the grave. "I will not leave you desolate, I come unto you." "I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away." "A little while and ye behold Me no more; and again a little while and ye shall see Me." "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go unto the Father."

And there was the same future life for them too. They were to follow Him; to enter into the same life as He was going to enter; to become as much at one with God as He was to be. The Father's house was their house too. He was entering it, not to claim it for Himself, but as their representative. "Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth Me no more; but ye behold Me: because I live, ye shall live also." You cannot separate Christ from humanity. You cannot put the human race in one category, and Jesus Christ, the Brother of Man, in another. If Jesus can say, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore," then shall mankind also be alive for evermore.

Now this truth of Immortality, which Christ so clearly taught, satisfies a profound want and hope of the human soul. The idea of a future life is one of the great and enduring ideas of mankind.

The present world seems too incomplete, too much a world of beginnings to satisfy the human mind, and everywhere and in all ages it hopes for another world that lies beyond the narrow horizon that girts us round. There is in mankind a longing for harmony, and peace, and perfect surroundings, and fulness of life, and fulness of power; and the future satisfaction of this longing is one of the great hopes which the human heart persistently cherishes and keeps alive. The form which this hope takes is often grotesque; the expectations of what the future life is to be are often crude and childish; yet the fact remains that Immortality hangs like a bright aurora in the sky of human thought and faith. It is our very nature to desire to live, and a thousand theories will not do away with the fact. Men might as well try to do away with the desire of food, or rest, or love, or knowledge. It is a natural, God-implanted desire of our spiritual nature, and there is not the remotest chance of it dying out of mankind.

Even the unbelievers in Personal Immortality look into the future and image before the mind the development of a higher, truer life of humanity in which they shall, by the immortality of thought and influence, have a part. Even they do not, in reality, think of themselves as dropping into absolute nothingness. They believe—and it is their inspiration and strength to believe—that they shall join “the choir invisible,” and so being dead shall yet speak, being gone away shall yet have a kind of future existence.

The assurance of Immortality, therefore, which Christ gave, confirms the hope and meets the longing of mankind. All the foregleams of this truth, which glanced and flitted in Hebrew psalm and prophecy, in Greek poetry and philosophy, in Oriental worship and speculation, were purified from their falsities and focussed by Christ into a glorious and resplendent orb. We owe much to Christ. He has given the revelation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He has given the revelation of the Divine greatness and blessedness of self-sacrifice. And He has also given the revelation of Immortality. When you bind this Trinity of revelations into a holy, everlasting Unity, you have

"the truth as it is in Jesus"; the truth which the world has dimly, painfully, through much doubt and superstition, age after age, been seeking after, and which it wants for comfort and rest and life. As Christ speaks of the life beyond this life, there is a response of satisfaction and joy in the human heart. For life, it is felt, is the one absolute joy, and to cease to live the one absolute sorrow. We can find strength to bear the loss of those who have loved us and whom we have loved, when we believe that they are not dead, but alive; not defeated, but victorious; not in sorrow, but in rapture; not cold in the earth, but warm in Paradise; not victims of an eternal mortality, but raised into a glorious Immortality. We can also think with calmness—not the calmness of the Stoic, but the calmness of serene and living peace, such as Christ Himself had—of the time when for ourselves the end shall come, when no more work on earth can be done, when the sights and sounds of this world shall fade away, if we look forward to a life in God, to a life of love and work with Him, to a life in which all the highest and largest aspirations we have ever known shall be more than realised.

But the teaching of Christ upon the Future Life has also a bearing upon modern thought and unbelief. Christ was no Agnostic. He never said, "I cannot be sure; I cannot tell; I do not know." To Him the future was an absolute certainty—as much the Father's house as was the present. He knew that to preach the Unknowable was to preach that which has no power, and never can have any power in human life. He, whom so many generations have felt to be the highest, holiest, best in human history, the crown of our manhood, whose life and teachings and death have been the greatest moral force the world has ever felt,—*He* lived and worked in the light of the *Knowledge* of Immortality.

Nor was it merely an immortality of *influence* that He taught. There is such a thing as the wise and good and great of the past living on in the memory and love and life and character of those who come after them. Statesmen, Poets, Thinkers, Philanthropists, Martyrs, Parents, may still bless the world after they have left it.

This kind of immortality is a blessed and noble truth. The old enters into the new—the new has its roots in the old. In this way the progress of mankind is made sure. Every new age has a deeper, mightier impulse upward and forward, because the past does not die, or if in a sense it dies, it rises again and is with us still. This is a noble aim to live for. Only it is the only immortality that some believe in. “It is enough,” they say, “and it ought to be enough for men. Let them fight and endure, and then die and be satisfied, for their battle will help mankind.” It is all very heroic, but it has in it the tone of a *desperate* love and heroism, not the tone of a love and heroism that is buoyant and happy. And, indeed, it is a melancholy outlook, do what you may to be content with it and to weave it into a doctrine of higher self-sacrifice and larger fidelity to duty. It is not the way that Christ left the matter, nor the apostles. He would, He said, live in the lives of His disciples, and through them pass into the life of the world to regenerate it. They should feel His presence when He was gone, and His words would be power and fire and light within them, and in all the trouble of their lives and in all the battle they had to fight He would be their consolation and victory. But He went far beyond this. He would in that personality which they had known and loved live again in the Father’s house. It was a personal and conscious Immortality into which He would pass. To believe anything else than this of Christ, to think of Him as only living in the human race and in history, not as *Himself* alive, is unspeakably awful and sad. Paul felt that it was simply unthinkable. “If there is no resurrection of the dead,” he writes, “then is Christ not raised,”—a thought wholly incredible and unbelievable to him. And Christ is the Head and Representative of humanity; our Immortality is bound up with His, and so, while we may hope to live on as a power for good in the hearts and lives of those who come after us, with that hope we may also entwine this one, the hope of Personal Immortality: and the two thus woven and blended together will complete and strengthen each other. “I have fought the good fight,” said St. Paul, “I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” But he did not finish with that retrospect

of an earthly career—he passed by a natural step forward to the future, arched over the life on earth with a glorious, infinite sky —“henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

We thank Agnosticism for teaching us with fresh emphasis the immortality of thought and work and influence in the world we leave behind us. It is a truth that has power in it. It tends to weed out of the heart the narrow selfishness, the longing for mere happiness in the future, which is apt to grow up in us. But it is only one side of the shield. And we, walking by faith and not by sight, complete it by the other truth of Personal Immortality.

WOODFORD.

THOMAS HAMMOND.



DIFFERENT STANDPOINTS.—“The other day it seemed to be the centre of attraction to the whole world. Everybody who went with us in the train was bound for it; and once within the walls of the building we seemed to be in some great exchange, to which men and women had flocked from every quarter of the globe. Who could think of anything in those gaming rooms but the play? Who could feel anything but the passions which are there stimulated and fed? We could only look at the outer world then from the standpoint of Monte Carlo; and how base and degrading a view of life was that which we then obtained! But now, up here on the mountain, breathing the pure air of heaven, and rejoicing in all this grandeur and glory of nature, how miserably small and contemptible that sweltering hell seems to be. Perhaps some day all the evils of life that perplex us so greatly now, the griefs that burden us and the cares that vex, will appear to have no more important part in our lot than yonder insignificant heap of stones has in the midst of this wonderful landscape.”—T. WEMYSS REID.

Germs of Thought.

The Consolation of God's Sovereignty.

"THE LORD REIGNETH, LET THE EARTH REJOICE."—*Psalm xcvi. 1.*

THESE words may lead us along two lines of thought—

I.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON THIS EARTH. That which is the very greatest thought that has ever entered the human mind, and which presents the noblest hope that has ever stirred the human heart, and which forms the grandest scheme that has ever directed human energy is the thought, the hope, the scheme of a kingdom of God upon the earth,—of the universal, everlasting, spiritual reign of God over the human race, that kingdom which Jesus Christ saw in clear and constant vision and which He lived and died to establish. To look and long for that coming time, to labour, in their own way and measure, for its advancement is the wisdom and privilege of the good.

Meantime, in a very important sense, *God is reigning on the earth*, irrespective of our will, in spite of men's ill-will, in virtue of His Godhead. And comparing His kingdom with those of this world we may say of it, that it is (1) *necessarily autocratic in its form*. So strong is the disposition in man to abuse the power he wields, and so frequently have men in possession of absolute power abused their opportunities, that the very word, "autocracy," has come to signify that which is objectionable. But it is not necessarily so: on the other hand, there have been times when autocratic government has been wise and benignant. God's government *must* be autocratic: there is none to share His throne: The highest of the highest of His creatures must be immeasurably below Him in wisdom and in power, and, therefore, in rank and office. (2) *It is singular in its basis*. Human sovereignty may be a usurpation, or it may be hereditary, or it may be elective; but the Divine sovereignty is based on essential and

moral rectitude; it is the one right thing that He who is the Creator, Preserver, Restorer, Benefactor of men should receive the allegiance of all. An earthly king owes at least as much to his subjects as they to him. God owes nothing to His subjects; they everything to Him. (3) *It is universal in its range*: extending to all systems, to all worlds, to all classes and conditions of men; the peer and the prince standing on the same level with the peasant. (4) *It is profound in its reach*. The kings of the earth, so long as they receive outward homage and obedience, cannot complain if their subjects withhold their esteem and their affection. But the first requirement of the Heavenly King is that we shall "love Him with all the heart." He considers Himself quite unserved and positively disobeyed if we do not render to Him the cheerful obedience of affection. (5) *It is a present, active, accessible power*. Some men think of God as of a distant potentate who dwells apart, unconcerned with passing events in any part of His creation, whose one action and relation to the world was originally to impart to matter its properties and to mind its attributes; that it is childish to dread His wrath, credulous to hope for His help. We have no such belief. We do not believe that it adds anything to His glory or greatness to shut Himself out from the affairs of His universe and wrap Himself up in the contemplation of His being: we believe that the All-powerful and All-wise One is powerful and wise enough to arrange His kingdom so that His children shall have access to Him and He to them; that the All-loving One is too gracious to implant in His children's breast a deep-seated instinct to cry to Him for help in their time of need and anguish when, by the constitution He has ordained, it is impossible for Him to help them; that the All-faithful One is too true to Himself and to us to promise us His delivering grace when we cry for it, and not to mean what He says. Yes! God is with us,—not locally and geographically merely, but spiritually, sympathetically, practically, actively with us; laying His hand upon us; controlling, co-operating, counteracting; directing, defeating, determining; making effectual or bringing to nothing the designs and endeavours of the children of men. And we do well to go to Him, not

trembling, as Esther to Ahasuerus, but with holy confidence in all times of personal, family, social, national necessities, to ask for His pity, to pray for His delivering power.

II.—THE CONSOLATION WHICH THE FACT OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY GIVES TO THE GOOD. (1) It is a consolation that *the Evil One does not reign*: that strong as are the forces of evil in this world, they are not supreme; that greater is He that works for righteousness than all they that work for sin and ruin; that our great adversary has himself an Adversary who is mightier than he; that though we may be in danger of being "led captive at his will," he is under the control of the Omnipotent. (2) It is a consolation that *mere force does not reign*. We are often tempted to think that blind, undistinguishing force is the supreme thing here; but it is not so. All the forces that are at work are "under law," and law is under the control of the Divine Law-maker; and He can act upon and control His own laws, touching links out of sight with His skilful hand, changing the aspect and the issue of things at His holy will and in accordance with His far-seeing wisdom, evolving the bright and the blessed out of the dark and the distressing. (3) It is a consolation that *man does not reign*. There have been times when the destinies of a continent have seemed to be in the hands of a Cyrus, a Cæsar, a Napoleon; and now it may seem that very large issues hang on the decision of a few controlling minds in London, St. Petersburg, Berlin. Yet God can and will determine results, and He can overrule all events, either saving from calamity, or compelling disaster itself to yield "peaceable fruits of righteousness." "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice." (4) We may all rejoice that *we ourselves do not reign* over our own lives. We should like to be sovereign over our own circumstances, lord of our own life, to have our health, our position, our relationships at our own disposal. But no greater calamity could happen to us. We, least of all men, know what is good for us, how much of prosperity, or of praise, or of enjoyment we can stand, under what conditions our lives would be happy and successful. It is most likely that we should choose that which would lead down to error, to evil, to deterioration, to death. Of all things for

which we bless God we may well thank Him most heartily that "the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "THE LORD reigneth,"—the *loving* Lord, who wills the happiness of His children; the *holy* Lord, who wills their true and pure well-being; the *wise* Lord, who will not withhold any good thing, but will withhold that which *seems* to be so but is not; the *mighty* Lord, who can compel the saddest and strangest events to contribute to our well-being; the *faithful* Lord, who will make good the kindest of His promises,—“The Lord reigneth,” and not we ourselves; “let us rejoice and be glad.”

BRISTOL.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.

Heaven.

“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED: YE BELIEVE IN GOD, BELIEVE ALSO IN ME. IN MY FATHER’S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS: IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU. I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. AND IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME AGAIN, AND RECEIVE YOU UNTO MYSELF; THAT WHERE I AM, THERE YE MAY BE ALSO.”—*John* xiv. 1–3.

THUS spoke our Lord to His apostles, dimly hinting at the shortly to be accomplished event of His Ascension, which their hearts were not yet capable of receiving; and, as the yearly commemoration of that event comes round in the course of the Church’s seasons, we ask ourselves, “Why are we called upon to commemorate this fact? What practical bearing has it on our lives?” The same thought occurs to us, I suppose, as part answer to our question.

“I go to prepare a place for you,” our Lord says. Let us try to think what that “place” will be like. We cannot form any *adequate* conception of it, because, as we are forewarned, “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for

them that love Him"; but we can, I think, by earnest thought form some idea of it, and some idea is at least better than none. Let us take then a few of the images under which St. John, in his Revelation, gives us a glimpse of heavenly blessedness, and try to puzzle them out.

For the first image let us take the description given us in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation, of the gates, walls, and foundations of the holy city. Jewel flashing against jewel,—brilliancy melting into brilliancy,—light, colour, and symmetry in their most perfect combinations,—beauty "all musical in its immensities": it is a marvellous description, and might well be called the description of the palace of beauty. Is there nothing within us to which such an image makes a strong appeal? Surely there is a mysterious something within us which we call "the sense of the beautiful"; something within us which is awed by the lofty mountain and wide stretching sea, and which is calmed and subdued by the soft tints of the evening cloud; something which loves sun and rainbow and leaf and flower and tree; something which, if it could only see for a moment as well as read and think of heaven, would yearn with almost wild and distracted desire after it. So true and deeply settled, indeed, is this instinct within us, when it has once been called into consciousness, that a celebrated German poet has been bold to say that, if duly cultivated, it would of itself be sufficient to ennoble and regenerate mankind without any aid from sacrament, prayer, or Scripture. It would be easy enough of course to show that he is wrong here; but I just mention this to show with what intensity this "sense of the beautiful," as we call it, has burned and does burn in *some* souls. In *every* soul this principle has been implanted and, whether latent or active, subsists within us as an earnest of our heavenly inheritance.

But let us pass on to another image. We shall find one in the same twenty-first chapter, in the 22-25 verses of it. "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them

which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there." Two things are told us here: (1) That there shall be no temple in heaven, and (2) That the city hath no need of the sun or moon to enlighten it. The absence of both things is explained by *one fact*—the immediate revealed presence of God. "The Lord God and the Lamb" are the temple of the city, and "the Lord God and the Lamb" are the light of the city. Here, I think, we have foreshadowed the perfect fulfilment of our Lord's words to the Samaritan woman: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Under the image of the temple, I fancy, we are to understand religious systems, creeds, and forms of worship, and under the image of the sun and moon, nature. Through religious systems, and by consideration of the marvels of nature, it is that we know God now; "for now we know in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then shall that which is in part be done away." God seen face to face; spirit worshipping Spirit. What an intoxication, dreamed of on earth, perhaps once or twice realised in a lifetime for a brief moment (as when S. Paul describes himself as "caught up into the third heaven," whether in the body he could not tell, or whether out of the body he could not tell), but *then* not for a passing moment, but always and for ever.

Let us pass on. At the beginning of the twenty-second chapter we have this image presented to us: "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." This image explains itself. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." But what a beautiful image it is for sin-wearied mortals! The clear limpid stream, proceeding out

of the throne of God and sparkling with a brightness brighter than the sun, even with the brightness of His presence, and then becoming cool and shady again for those who have been wounded sore in the battle of life, by the overshadowing of the tree of life with its rich luxuriance of healing leaves and fruitage! The "Christian Lethe" this might be called, save that it far exceeds in depth and beauty of conception its heathen counterpart!

But to take another image. We shall find it in the fourth chapter and the sixth verse: "Before the throne there was a sea of glass." This is the image of peace. Wild and stormy are the waves of this troublesome world,—full of doubt and fear, struggles and temptations, for all such as would lead godly lives and follow the good and true, yea, and bringing forth much sorrow and travail even for such as float recklessly with the tide. But before the throne of God there is only peace and calm,—“a sea of glass, clear as crystal.” All men long for peace and calm. We have many of us heard or read of a school of thought called Stoicism, the professors of which made the attainment of mental peace their great aim in life; but I have often thought that *in theory* we are *all* of us Stoics. This longing for peace, however, can never find its realization in this life. Everything without us and within is against it. It is given unto us, in fact,—if we would only make an effort to grasp the lesson which it teaches us,—it is given unto us to turn our thoughts towards heaven. *There* we may find peace,—*true peace*,—not the peace of the Stoic, founded upon a fancied obliteration of desire, but founded upon the full and perfect gratification of desire!

Two more thoughts about heaven, and I shall have done: viz., the music of heaven and the King of heaven!

The music of heaven! (Rev. xix. 6.) "And I heard," says St. John, "and I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." The triumph hymn of a redeemed universe, expressing in a soft undertone countless individual experiences; the experience of the saint, and the experience of the penitent, "plucked only as a brand from the burning"; the experience of the God-beloved,

taken early to rest, and the experience of the aged watcher, waiting long for the salvation of God, and countless other experiences,—expressing all these in a soft undertone, and yet harmonising their discordances in the magnificent chord of present exultation, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” What a hymn will this be! Shall we ever weary of listening to it, or of joining in it? The dark ways of Providence justified,—what an exhaustless inspiration for music and poetry!

But to pass on once more. The King of heaven! The beatific vision of the Trinity! Loveliness through all ages becoming even more and more lovely; wisdom seeming ever more and more wise! Holiness shining more and more unto the perfect day! Who shall speak of this? Even St. John is silent here. The vision of the Triune God seems to have left upon his mind only the impression of something too dazzling to look upon. “Behold, there was a throne set in heaven,” he says, “and one sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” Dazzling brightness, you see, is His whole conception. And how else could he have conceived of God, how else could he have described the Divine Essence? Earth has no language or similitude suitable to Him. When, ages before, Moses had asked God for a definition of Himself, even Infinite Wisdom could only answer, “I AM THAT I AM.” There was no comparison He *could* institute; He could not say of anything created, “I am like this, or that”; He could only compare Himself to Himself, “I AM THAT WHICH I AM.”

Moses could not understand God. St. John could not understand Him; He was to him only light unapproachable,—“as a jasper and a sardine stone.” Ah! but in the long ages of eternity, exhaustless as He is exhaustless, men will learn to know Him, every age will reveal some new depth of His nature, and still there will be countless depths to be revealed. Six or ten thousand years old or more the world is now, and how slowly are we accumulating a knowledge of the works of the Creator: slowly, I mean, compared with what remains yet to be known. And if His works seem almost an exhaustless deep, His works which are

outside Himself, what will He Himself, in His innermost essence and nature be? Surely, the contemplation of Him will give abundant employment to every faculty of our being! Heaven, with God to contemplate, will be no state of wearisome idleness, although it will be a state of perfect rest—"a rest where they rest not day nor night, saying, holy, holy, holy," as Richard Baxter beautifully puts it. Such then, in as far as we can think it out in a few moments,—such then is heaven! Such is the home which Christ, ascending up on high, has gone to prepare for us. May God, of His mercy, bring us all thither!

ANTIGUA, WEST INDIES.

CHARLES G. HUNT, M.A.,

Priest of St. John's Cathedral.

Simeon's Prediction Concerning Christ.

"AND SIMEON BLESSED THEM, AND SAID UNTO MARY HIS MOTHER, BEHOLD, THIS CHILD IS SET FOR THE FALL AND RISING AGAIN OF MANY IN ISRAEL; AND FOR A SIGN WHICH SHALL BE SPOKEN AGAINST; (YEA, A SWORD SHALL PIERCE THROUGH THY OWN SOUL ALSO,) THAT THE THOUGHTS OF MANY HEARTS MAY BE REVEALED."—*Luke ii. 34, 35.*

MOTHERS naturally feel a very deep interest in the physical, intellectual, and moral development of their children, and watch with eagerness for signs of future eminence or proficiency. They can generally see (or think they can) buds of promise, which a stranger or casual visitor cannot readily discern; and they form mental pictures of their children's character and career which, alas, are sometimes very different from the subsequent reality.

"The child—what will he become?" Many a mother has asked this. Perhaps it is best that she cannot know. Very much depends upon the care she takes to mould the character, upon the thoughts she instils, the principles she imparts, the discipline she exercises, the patient, unceasing watchfulness which she bestows, and the companions with whom she allows

him to associate. But all the blame does not rest with the parent if the child prove a source of shame and sorrow by-and-bye.

There was one mother whose child's career was plainly revealed to her. "This child is set," &c. It is thought by some that the words, "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel," refer to one class of persons only. But the word, "*again*," is not in the original. It is more probable that two classes are indicated. Some would fall; others would rise. Christ is here set forth under four aspects.

I.—AS A CAUSE OF DEBASEMENT AND RUIN. "This child is set for the fall of many in Israel." See Isaiah viii. 14, 15; 1 Peter ii. 7, 8; Romans ix. 31-33; Matthew xxi. 44. The only power that can save men may become, through their unbelief and rebellion, the occasion of their destruction. The rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation was followed by their speedy overthrow by the Romans. In every case it is true, that if Christ be not welcomed as a Saviour, honoured as a King, loved as a Friend, ruin will come. Every attempt at resistance or opposition will only injure those who make it, as one who rushed against a rock instead of standing upon it. The Gospel never leaves men as it finds them; it subdues them or renders them more obdurate; it kills or it makes alive. In nature the same object may produce very different effects. Fire hardens clay, but softens wax; the sun unlocks the iron-bound soil of winter, but dries up moist earth; it quickens vegetation, but hastens decay; light, so welcome to the healthy, is hurtful to weak or diseased eyes; strong breezes, which give renewed vigour to some, aggravate the sufferings of others; honey, which is generally sweet to the taste, is bitter to one in whom fever rages. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one," &c. (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.)

II.—AS A MEANS OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ELEVATION. Christ is set for "the rising of many" (see Isaiah xxviii. 16). The believer is said to build on Christ. Christ and His Gospel are the basis of every truly noble life. Character is a structure founded either upon the precepts of the Bible, or the laws and principles of the world. Sin degrades men; Christianity elevates

and ennobles them. Sin produces misery; Christianity gives joy. Sin ends in despair; Christianity awakens, confirms, and enlarges continually a bright and blessed hope. Civilization is said to have accomplished much; but it is forgotten that civilization is itself largely indebted to Christianity. There is no radical change of heart until Christ is accepted; then true nobility begins.

III.—AS AN OBJECT OF REPROACH AND SCORN. "A sign that shall be spoken against." No portion of Simeon's prophecy was so speedily and clearly fulfilled. At one time Christ was called a glutton; at another time insane. His friends said, "He is beside Himself"; His enemies said, "He hath a devil and is mad." At the sacking of Constantinople a crucifix was taken down by the Turks, and a Turk's cap was put upon the head of it, and so it was set up and shot at with arrows, as "the God of the Christians." The ridicule and scorn which was so patiently and bravely borne by Christ must be endured also by His followers. The expression, "yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also," has been variously interpreted. Some think that it predicted the martyrdom of Mary. Others see in it a declaration of a struggle through repentance to faith,—a sharp pang of sorrow for sin (see Alford *in loco*). But it is more natural to regard it as referring to the anguish which would rend Mary's heart as she witnessed Christ's sufferings. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, His mother."

No one can be associated with Christ now without sharing His sufferings. When His name is blasphemed, His mission ridiculed, His honour assailed, a sword should pierce through our souls also.

IV.—AS THE REVEALER OF HUMAN HEARTS. "That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." His being spoken against would reveal men's hatred of holiness. Men's treatment of Christ formed, and forms still a test of character. They show themselves to belong to one of two parties, according as they receive or reject Him. Pride, covetousness, self-will, worldliness are made manifest in the unregenerate directly the claims of Christ are enforced. "What think ye of Christ?"

DERBY.

FRED. J. AUSTIN.

The Associations of Olivet.

“JESUS WENT TO THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.”—*John* viii. 1.

THIS sounds, when announced as a text, a comparatively unimportant event to chronicle in the world's great history-book, but it helps, with its associations, to form that cluster of holy circumstances in the life of our Lord which is ever pleasant for our reflection; and as the Master's doings are held up the pattern for our own, let us take the fact, gathering all that has consecrated it and made it famous and precious to every believer. Let me bring to your notice six characteristics of the spot which may aid us in finding, to *our* profit, our Olivet.

I.—IT WAS THE PLACE OF PROPHECY. In the time of the Church's darkness, just before the coming of our Lord, after Israel had returned from captivity, and they were building the second temple, for their continued sins Zechariah is made to foretell the destruction of the city thus (Zech. xiv. 3, 4). We know how that was fulfilled; our text shows it in part, and from subsequent history we gather the rest. But the Jews could not realise it. All their ideals of Messiah's reign were tinted with martial colours. Their notions of glory could not be separated from the heathen idea.

The word of God cannot be broken. His feet did stand on the mount of Olives. And how? In what attitude? To put the gold into the fire, and like the refiner of the precious metal to keep His eye upon it and watch its purification. Our text takes us back to a prophecy five hundred years before accomplished. Surely, then, what God promises to fulfil in our experiences of need He will. Our text indicates—

II.—A PLACE OF WORSHIP. This it undoubtedly was to Jesus, and, strange to say, so it was to David (2 Sam. xv. 30). It was to David the house of God, and to the Son of David it was a spot hallowed by His prayers, His continued supplications lasting

through the whole night. This place of communion was also a place of *rest*. Rest is not in fleeing from duty. It is not idleness. It is faith's greatest activity. It is to have the soul calmly and consciously dependent on God, delighting in His service, finding satisfaction in His presence, and waiting any fresh commission of the Divine will. "Roll thy burden on the Lord." Do it and that is rest. Meditation, communion, rest, and praise consecrate any spot and make it a place of worship. If Jesus needed an Olivet for quiet communion and prayer, surely His earthly followers need one still more. But this was—

III.—THE PLACE OF PRIVATE INSTRUCTION. Our Lord's public teaching often needed a key to interpret it. It needed the supplement of a clearer and fuller explanation, which Christ gave to His disciples. And so, often away from the busy crowd, He took them where He might quietly reason with them, hear their questions, and unfold to them the mysteries of His kingdom: and this was on the verdant slopes of the mount of Olives. Here it was that He told them the temple they admired was doomed; to beware of false prophets. Here He taught them to look into the face of the last judgment of all flesh. Hither, after supper, He took them to prepare them for the tragedy of the cross; and here was delivered that masterful discourse, so rich in beauty of expression, and so full of comfort, which we find in John xiv. And so still, in finding our Olivet, we find there our Saviour ready to expound to us the mysteries of our being, and to administer to the lip of our souls heaven's cordial of abiding comfort.

IV.—THIS WAS THE PLACE OF DIVINE COMMISSION. From the base of this mountain Christ sent His disciples to fetch the colt which should carry Him into Jerusalem. And here, after His resurrection, He gave them that solemn charge to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. And so still. In the place of true worship, where is found Divine comfort, Christ says, "Go, preach"; "ye are My witnesses"; go forth and bear the vessels of your Lord.

V.—THIS WAS THE PLACE OF INTERCESSION. From the heights of Olivet Christ looked on Jerusalem and wept over it,—tears

that carried with them a wail and a prayer. Here, too, the struggle of Gethsemane. Let us remember, that in the dark night of our soul's experience, there is One who pleads for us, who sends His angel to lift us out of our struggle into victory, out of darkness, to stand beneath the shining stars of eternal promises.

VI.—WE BEHOLD THE PLACE OF ASCENSION. Heaven comes down in a cloud to the summit of the mountain, whither the risen Christ has climbed to meet it, and carried home to honour and glory the greatest Conqueror the world has ever known.

And from *our* Olivets, by the grace of God, we too may ascend out of sin and self to noble life and holy service; out of fear, into the radiance of the hope that maketh not ashamed. And, by-and-bye, when life's journey comes to the last turn in the road, which leaves the darkness behind, the shadows and the mysteries, for the light of the better land, God will descend to the dying saint's Olivet, from whence he is crying, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," and lift him up into the fulness and the glory of the life everlasting. Till then, remember that temptations may hold your soul in the grip of a mighty struggle as your Master's was, but through Him you shall ascend into deeper faith, clearer perceptions of duty, higher aspirations, finer feelings, fuller service, and perfect peace.

FAKENHAM.

W. HALLS.

OLIVET, THE INCARNATION MONUMENT.—"There is a height to which discipleship reverts with fondest memory, and which it treads with softest step—that mountain where, beyond any spot in Palestine, 'God was manifest in the flesh,' where the Great Intercessor was wont to pray, where the Man of Sorrows wept over Jerusalem, on whose slopes the Great Master blessed the Apostle-band and sent his message of mercy to mankind, the mountain on whose gentle turf His feet last stood, the Sabbatic, pensive, and expectant MOUNT OF OLIVES."—DR. JAMES HAMILTON.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Oath Taking.*

Chapter v. 12.—“BUT ABOVE ALL THINGS, MY BRETHREN, SWEAR NOT, NEITHER BY HEAVEN, NEITHER BY THE EARTH, NEITHER BY ANY OTHER OATH: BUT LET YOUR YEA BE YEA; AND YOUR NAY, NAY; LEST YE FALL INTO CONDEMNATION.”

It is something sinful which the apostle is here so anxious to warn his readers against, something to indulge in which would be in every way unbecoming their Christian profession. Not only so, it is a sin to the committing of which they ^{sinful} ^{oath-taking.} are under strong temptation; it is one which easily besets them, or it is one which, from their present circumstances, they will be sure, if they are not very careful, to fall into. Something sinful, else it would not have been forbidden; something they were peculiarly open to commit, else they would not have been so specially warned against it.

This being so, the question of the lawfulness of oath-taking, of swearing by the name of God, does not directly or necessarily rise out of this passage. So far, there may be such a thing as swearing by the name of God in which there shall be no sin, where it may be allowable and right. Is there such a thing? The apostle does not condemn it; what he condemns is the oath which is sinful, the swearing which is profane.

The general question then of the lawfulness of oaths; of their history, as that is illustrated in the Old Testament or in the New;

* For the Second Sunday after Trinity; from the Evening Lesson.

of the imposition of judicial oaths by the civil government; of the right which the civil government may or may not have to impose such oaths upon its subjects,—or, supposing it to have this right, how far it may dispense with it; of the influences upon the community which a widely ramified judicial oath-taking must necessarily exert: into these wide aspects of a very important and practical subject the words of the apostle do not directly lead us, except in so far as they bear on the particular question of “profane swearing.” It is necessary to understand oath-taking so far, at least, as to get at the sinful elements which have gathered round it: the profanity will be seen to be the exceeding sinful thing it is when it is set in the light of His countenance whose name and whose character it sets at nought.

To begin with the necessity for oath-taking, the demand for the testimony of the oath. This has its origin in the sinfulness of the sinful heart. Were there no sin, there were no oath-taking; “yea” or “nay” would suffice; the “yea” of one man would never be met by the doubting, questioning “nay” of another; the “yea” would be “yea” and the “nay” would be “nay.” First, there is the sinful disregard of the interests of men, and, second, the sinful disregard of the interests of truth. Men do not love each other enough to give each other their due, they do not love truth enough to give it its due; they have to be compelled to this, and the strongest weapon that can be used as the instrument of compulsion is just the bringing of them under the terrors of this truth which they would fain, but dare not, renounce. It is the testimony of the oath; it is the power of the eternal world, in all its solemnity and in all its authority, brought to bear upon the whole being,—it is the being brought before the throne of the Almighty, the judgment seat of the eternal! “Am I willing to swear by the name of the Almighty; will I take God to witness that I speak the truth; am I ready to leave myself in His hands according as I am true or false?” This is the origin of the oath; it is the last resource of men who do not love each other and who do not love the truth,—who know this about each other and who, there-

May there be
oath-taking
which is not
sinful?

Has its origin
in sin.

fore, distrust each other. If an oath will not bind a man, there is no other power that can bind him; if he can call upon God to witness to a lie, can make the God of truth an accomplice in a falsehood, no other authority on earth can touch him.

It is to be granted, however, that this is not the ordinary way in which men elude the authority of an oath, in which they try to escape the obligation of an appeal to God. So long as they are intensely conscious of the solemnity of the circumstances in which, by such an appeal, they have placed themselves, so long as the eye of the Almighty is felt to be fixed upon them, so long as they know that it is *His* ear that is listening to them, just so long will they, in most cases, be afraid to utter aught else but truth; the terrors of eternity, so visibly displayed and so intensely felt, are too awful to allow the falsehood which, but for these terrors, the lips had spoken. But may there not be some way devised by which all the forms of the oath may be observed, and

How to swear
and not
be bound.

yet the terrible presence of Him in whose name it is taken be dispelled or dispersed. Can there not be an oath which would serve all the reassuring purposes of an oath, but which can be evaded or broken because it can be so managed that the presence of Him, whose presence is the awful sanction of any oath, had been evaded or ignored? I cannot, the terrors of the eternal world are too terrible, I cannot utter a falsehood if I appeal directly to God to bear witness to what I say; but I want my neighbour's possessions, and I will not scruple to lie to obtain or to keep them; could I not invent some form and persuade myself into the half belief that there is nothing very wicked in it,—some form which I could cajole my neighbour into believing was an appeal to God but which was not, a form then by which I could secure myself against the terrors of the Almighty and at the same time serve my own ends?

This is what may be called the transition point from "*swearing*" to "*profane*" *swearing*; from swearing by God's name, with the solemnity and reverence due to it, and speaking the truth under the awful sense of His presence, to swearing by something less than God's name, escaping thereby the sense of His presence, disregarding therefore the claims of truth. *In reality*, there is

but one oath, there can be but one, it is swearing by the name of God; but how many forms of oaths there are. *By heaven! By the earth! By the temple! By the altar! By Jerusalem! By my head!* Where did they all come from, and for what purpose

Invention of forms. were they invented? has been already the question;

but a glance at the history of the Jews in connection with their treatment of the name of God will, perhaps, set it in a still clearer light. In the early history of this people the name of Jehovah was regarded with peculiar reverence; it was not infrequently used, as is evident from its occurrence throughout Scripture. A time came, however, when to guard against its desecration it was ordained that it should never be pronounced at all; an overscrupulousness, for fear of taking it in vain, resolved not to utter it at all. The result was such as, with a more spiritual foresight and a deeper insight into the nature of the human heart, might have been expected. The name of God, the consciousness of the presence of God gradually decreased. There was gradually fostered among them the most artificial ways of thinking and speaking of God, these among the rest, and as a direct consequence, a host of oaths by which, while they got rid of the overpowering presence of the Supreme, they were able to play fast and loose with truth and the interests of their fellow-men. To gratify their own ends they profaned the name of God. It was long before this result openly revealed itself, but in the time of our Lord it was apparent enough, and some of His most solemn utterances are directed, first of all, to revive the forgotten sense of God, and then to lay bare to those who did not wish to see it, that in every one of the oaths in which they had thought to get rid of God, God was as fully and terribly present as if they had sworn by the ineffable name itself. They made subtle,

Profane swearing. casuistical distinctions in the forms of their oaths, as if it had been possible to get rid of the essence of the thing by merely changing or varying its form! One might swear by the temple, or by the gold of the temple; he might swear by the altar, or by the gift upon the altar; very much the same thing one would think—not at all the same thing in the eyes of duty—evading God—forgetting men. Swearing by the

temple, or by the altar, did not mean anything, you might take this oath and not be bound by it; but to swear by the gold of the temple, or by the gift upon the altar, this was really an oath, this bound a man, from this there was no escape. Listen to our Lord as He tears away the flimsy veil with which they tried to hide from others, more than from themselves, the truth that there is but one oath, that there can be but one, and that every form is as solemn and as binding as another: "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple," &c. It is impossible to evade the profanity by merely omitting the name of God; God Himself is appealed to in whatever form the appeal may be made. An oath is an appeal to God; a profane oath is an oath which, whatever be the form of it, or whatever the purpose for which it is taken, profanes the name of God, treats the holy and reverend name with contempt.

The further stages in the natural history of profane swearing are easily traced. When once a man begins to make free with the name of God, dragging it in to confirm some silly statement, to uphold some passionate assertion, or to clinch some weak argument, there is little hope of his stopping short of that condition of moral ruin in which the very sense of what is due to God is blotted out. The swearer, the man who needlessly multiplies oaths, who makes frequent appeals to God to confirm his word, will inevitably become a profane swearer, a habitual profane swearer, than whom there is none more obnoxious to God or man, none who more insults his Maker or desecrates his own soul.

Apart from the oath imposed by the civil magistrate, which no civil magistrate has the right to impose, what an exceedingly rare thing it is for us to be placed in circumstances where there is even the semblance of necessity for an oath; where, if we were in a right state of mind, we should not feel it to be profanity even to think of such a thing! Let us look back over our past lives and ask how often has it happened that it was necessary, and in all good conscience justifiable, to take God to witness to some assertion or some promise we had made, when our own unsupported,

Habitual
swearing.

Have we ever
had any
occasion to
take an oath?

simple word was not sufficient, or when it would not have been received? Do we remember a single instance of such necessity? And yet, if without necessary call for it, if upon grounds less than the most necessitous, not to speak of grounds trivial and frivolous, we have lightly intruded upon the awful presence of the Supreme, we have lightly brought out to the street the symbols of the Holy One from His holy of holies, what other have we been doing than profaning His holy name, infringing upon that commandment, setting at nought that warning which the most devout among men are not too devout not to require: *"Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."*

It is in this spiritual sense, on this spiritual level, with this searchingness of appeal, that this Word of God, quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart, comes by the mouth of the apostle.

**The spiritual
depth
of this word.**

Speaking to his readers, the twelve tribes scattered abroad, he was speaking to a class of people among whom there might be many individuals who, though they were believers in Christ, had not yet had their sense of reverence for God so deepened and confirmed as to have been enabled to wean themselves from what had been a rooted habit of their race; and speaking to such, his words were the actual warning against what we have just been stigmatizing as an offence to God and man, the habit of profane swearing. Speaking to Christian men and women in our day, however, that is not his meaning, and that is not his warning. We are not habitual profane swearers; no such man is to be found in a Christian community; that, of itself, would stamp him as belonging to the reprobate and the profane. We are not profane swearers even upon rare occasions of passionate outbursts. If a Christian man is guilty of such an offence against high heaven, he repents of it with abhorrence of the sin and with solemn prayer and suppli-

**Quick
and powerful.**

cation that he may never be so left to himself again. We do not need to be warned against these gross forms of the breach of the Divine law. Do we not need then

the warning at all, and is this Word of God one we have got beyond? The evil thing which leads to profane swearing is that want of due reverence to God by which men are led lightly and familiarly to come into His presence with their trifling concerns, and to take Him as their witness in questions that even their fellow-men would think beneath them. Are we free from this evil? Are we filled with such a habitual sense of the awfulness of God, and of the awfulness of truth, that we dare not swear by this name, that only in the most solemn acts of worship dare we approach Him, and with purged hearts, in the spirit of Him who had gladly learned the lesson, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." This word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and those who feel themselves guiltless of the charge of profane swearing are ready to take up the words of the patriarch who defended himself so long as he had not been confronted with the Divine presence: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

THE DIVINE CREATION; THE FACT MORE THAN THE METHOD.—
"Scripture says that God created. But it nowhere defines that term. The means, the How of Creation is nowhere specified. Scripture again says that organised beings were produced, each according to their kind. But it nowhere defines that term. What a kind includes; whether it includes or not the capacity of varying is nowhere, in Scripture, specified."—CANON KINGSLEY.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn not in the light of any of these schools of expositions. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence.]

No. XXXIV.

"The Great Whore."—A Corrupt Christianity.

"AND THERE CAME ONE OF THE SEVEN ANGELS WHICH HAD THE SEVEN VIALS, AND TALKED WITH ME, SAYING UNTO ME, COME HITHER; I WILL SHew UNTO THEE THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHORE THAT SITTETH UPON MANY WATERS: WITH WHOM THE KINGS OF THE EARTH HAVE COMMITTED FORNICATION, AND THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH HAVE BEEN MADE DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION. SO HE CARRIED ME AWAY IN THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDERNESS; AND I SAW A WOMAN SIT UPON A SCARLET COLOURED BEAST, FULL OF NAMES OF BLASPHEMY, HAVING SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS. AND THE WOMAN WAS ARRAYED IN PURPLE AND SCARLET COLOUR, AND DECKED WITH GOLD AND PRECIOUS STONES AND PEARLS, HAVING A GOLDEN CUP IN HER HAND FULL OF ABOMINATIONS AND FILTHINESS OF HER FORNICATION: AND UPON HER FOREHEAD WAS A NAME WRITTEN, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. AND I SAW THE WOMAN DRUNKEN WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS, AND WITH THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS OF JESUS: AND WHEN I SAW HER, I WONDERED WITH GREAT ADMIRATION."—*Revelation* xvii. 1-6.

WHAT a strange woman loomed in John's vision here! He calls her "*the great whore*" (harlot). He saw her seated upon a "*scarlet coloured beast, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup full of abominations: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother*

of harlots and abominations of the earth. And she was drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." A strange creation this, truly, but scarcely stranger or more grotesque than many of the objects that have entered and still do enter into human dreams.

We must ask Protestant interpreters to say who this Woman is, for they know all about her. They, forsooth, are certain that she is papal Rome; I cannot say who she is, nor does it matter. I shall make use of her to illustrate *corrupt Christianity*; and this includes Protestantism as well as Popery. Conventional Christianity is as truly corrupt as Papal, and, in some respects, it is even worse. The description here given of this harlot suggests and illustrates three great evils ever conspicuous in corrupt Christianity,—*political subserviency, worldly proclivity, and religious intolerance*. Here is—

I.—POLITICAL SUBSERVIENCY. “*Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore (harlot) that sitteth upon many waters.*” Or many nations. This Woman, clothed in “*purple and scarlet*” and gorgeously adorned, yielded herself up to the desires and lusts of worldly authorities; empty voluptuaries drest in a little brief authority. “*With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication.*” The essence of genuine Christianity

is spiritual supremacy and invincible sovereignty over the princelets, kinglets, and emperors of the world, in all the little, as well as great, temporalities of life. Essentially Christianity is the absolute queen of life. Although her kingdom is “not of this world” her demand is that the world should bow to her.

In yielding to worldly influence she lost her pristine purity and primitive power, she got corrupted, and became more and more the servant of rulers and the instrument of States. This she has been from before the days of Constantine down to this hour. What is Conventional Christianity, not only throughout England but throughout Christendom, to-day? Verily, she is rather a *serf* than a *sovereign*. Worldly rulers employ her to consecrate their coronations and to give the aspect of sanctity to their tawdry pageantries, their sensual indulgencies, their unrighteous exactions, and their bloody wars. Truly, the purest virgin from heaven has become a harlot, the mere creature of worldly power. I am wearied of the cant of making this harlot the symbol

of Papal Rome, she is as truly a symbol of Protestant Christendom as of Papal Rome. The Reformation, in which Wickliff, Melancthon, and Luther so heartily engaged, is, for many reasons, more urgently required now in the realm of Conventional Christianity. And the reiterated cry of Voltaire against Popery in his day, "Crush the monster! Crush the monster!" all thoughtful men should raise now in relation to *Conventional Christianity*. Until Conventional Christianity is banished from the land, and the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount is restored, the moral condition of the human race will sink lower and lower into devildom and corruption. Here is—

II.—WORLDLY PROCLIVITY.
"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand." Here is worldliness, worldly vanity, and worldly greed. Genuine Christianity is essentially *unworldly*. Its Founder was born in a stable and cradled in a manger, He had nowhere to lay His head.

At night the green sod was His pillow, and the sable heavens His covering. His disciples He despatched on their mission without "purse or scrip," and none of His apostles preached the Gospel as a means of livelihood. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel," says Paul, "yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities." But what of Conventional Christianity? It is an instrument for worldly gain and aggrandisement. Everywhere men trade in the Gospel, and the trade is carried on with all the passionate avarice, foul fallacies, and flatulent puffings that characterise the market. Pulpits are regarded as means of livelihood, chapels and churches are become shops, ecclesiastics are the grandees of the world, robed in costly attire and rolling in chariots of opulence. Institutions abound and multiply, baptised with the name of Christian, where men of feeble talent but crawling craftiness creep into offices of salary and show. I protest that Conventional Christianity is not the Christianity of Christ—a Divine

entity that "seeketh not her own." The Christ exhibited in the creeds and institutions is as unlike the Christ of the Gospels, as the mechanical force of the manufacturing machine, throwing off commodities for trade, is unlike that vital energy in nature that clothes the landscape with verdure and fills the earth and the water with countless tribes of life. Here is—

III.—RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE. "*And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.*" "The phraseology," says *Moses Stuart*, "is derived from the barbarous custom, still extant among many Pagan nations, of drinking the blood of enemies slain in the way of revenge. Here then the fury of the persecutors is depicted in a most graphic manner." Genuine Christianity is essentially tolerant. "Charity suffereth long and is kind, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, charity believeth all things," &c. But Christianity corrupted has always been cruelly intolerant, and this whether it is called Pro-

testant or Papal! True, it does not shed blood as much as of yore, but if it does not take away life it may inflict on life annoyances and disabilities in many respects more painful than blood-shedding. This harlot is a "*mother*," her progeny is numerous and ever multiplying. "*The mother of harlots.*" The religious sects which crowd Christendom are all her daughters, and each sect has the intolerant spirit of its mother, each according to its measure is a persecutor, and, as a rule, the smaller the more virulent the spirit. Curs snarl and bark more as a rule than mastiffs. Large and affluent congregations can afford to overlook denominational circumstances that irritate the smaller and the poorer to wrath and rage.

CONCLUSION.—Such is corrupt Christianity, which is, alas, the current Christianity. It is very like the harlots on account of its political subserviency, worldly proclivity, and religious intolerance. What are we to do with this abomination? Flee from this Sodom, come out of this Babylon. "Crush the monster!"

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

No. XXXV.

A Picture of Moral Error.

“AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO ME, WHEREFORE DIDST THOU MARVEL? I WILL TELL THEE THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN, AND OF THE BEAST THAT CARRIETH HER, WHICH HATH THE SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS. THE BEAST THAT THOU SAWEST WAS, AND IS NOT; AND SHALL ASCEND OUT OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, AND GO INTO PERDITION: AND THEY THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH SHALL WONDER, WHOSE NAMES WERE NOT WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, WHEN THEY BEHOLD THE BEAST THAT WAS, AND IS NOT, AND YET IS. AND HERE IS THE MIND WHICH HATH WISDOM. THE SEVEN HEADS ARE SEVEN MOUNTAINS, ON WHICH THE WOMAN SITTETH. AND THERE ARE SEVEN KINGS: FIVE ARE FALLEN, AND ONE IS, AND THE OTHER IS NOT YET COME; AND WHEN HE COMETH, HE MUST CONTINUE A SHORT SPACE. AND THE BEAST THAT WAS, AND IS NOT, EVEN HE IS THE EIGHTH, AND IS OF THE SEVEN, AND GOETH INTO PERDITION. AND THE TEN HORNS WHICH THOU SAWEST ARE TEN KINGS, WHICH HAVE RECEIVED NO KINGDOM AS YET; BUT RECEIVE POWER AS KINGS ONE HOUR WITH THE BEAST. THESE HAVE ONE MIND, AND SHALL GIVE THEIR POWER AND STRENGTH UNTO THE BEAST.”—*Rev. xvii. 7-13.*

WHILST to the eye of the Infinite the greatest cities of the world, the mightiest empires, the most stupendous productions of human art are as nothing, and less than nothing, vanity, those great *moral principles* which are the expressions of His own nature, the laws that control the destinies of moral mind are of transcendent import. What are Egypt, Babylon, Rome, Paris, St. Petersburg, New York, London, &c., to Him? Shifting clouds, melting into infinite space; little bubbles, rising from and breaking into the ever-changing, ever-rolling stream of

time. But justice, truth, love, what are these? As real, as changeless, as lasting as God Himself. Hence it is that in going through this Apocalypse I all but ignore the fanciful and conflicting interpretations presented by what are called Evangelical expositors, and concern myself with those two principles, good and evil, that touch the spring of all human activities. Looking at these verses as an illustration of moral error, three things are observable, *its history is marvellous, its course is lamentable, and its supports are unstable.*

I.—ITS HISTORY IS MAR-

VELOUS. John, in his vision, seems to have wondered at this vision of the "mother of harlots," riding on the beast with "seven heads and ten horns." "*The angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel (wonder)?*" Evil is indeed a "*marvel*," a wonder. To use language we have elsewhere employed, it is mysterious on several accounts.

First: On account of the *darkness that enfolds its introduction*. When thinking of the introduction of moral evil, there are four questions which we ask with intense anxiety, but to which we seek a satisfactory solution in vain. *When* did it arise? A commencement it must have had. Evil is not eternal, there is but one Eternal Being in the universe, and He is "glorious in holiness." Evil, then, had a beginning, but when? Who shall tell the morning when the first dark cloud rose upon the bright firmament of moral mind? Who shall tell when the first breath of sin ruffled the peaceful atmosphere of God's creation? The events of that morning are not chronicled in the annals of our world. *How* did it rise?

There are two principles on which we can account for the prevalence of sin amongst men now,—*internal tendencies and external circumstances*. Man now has a strong disposition to sin, so that as soon as he begins to act he begins to sin, and then the outward circumstances under which he is brought up tempt him to wrong. To the latter we refer the introduction of sin into our world. Adam had no unholy tendencies, but an external force was brought to bear upon his holy nature, which turned him from rectitude. But the first sinner, whoever he might be, had neither this internal tendency nor the external circumstances. All within and without, above, beneath and around was in favour of holiness. The whole current of inner feeling, and the mighty tide of outward events were all flowing in favour of perfect purity. How could a being sin in such circumstances? How could he strike a discordant note amongst such harmonies? How could he rise up against and conquer all the mighty influences which were in favour of

holiness? How could he lift his nature against the Eternal and defy the Omnipotent to arms? All is mystery. *Where* did it arise? In what province of the universe? Amidst what order of intelligencies? And then, *why* did it arise? Omniscience must have foreseen it, and all the evil consequences that must start out from it. Almighty-ness could have prevented it. Why did He allow it to enter? Oh why? Evil is a mystery,

Secondly: On account of the *mask under which it works*. Evil never appears in its own true character. Dishonesty wears the aspect of rectitude; falsehood speaks the language of truth; selfishness has the voice of benevolence; profanity robes itself in the garb of sanctity; the "prince of darkness" appears like an angel of light. The most monstrous deeds that have been perpetrated under these heavens have been done in the name of religion. The Alexanders and the Cæsars of this world have fought their sanguinary battles and reared their empires upon slaughtered nations in the name of religion. The Popes of the world have

erected their iron throne upon the soul of Christendom in the name of religion. The persecutors of the world have invented their Inquisitions, built their dungeons, and kindled their fires in the name of religion. Ah me! The Son of God Himself was put to death in the name of religion. Wrong is *necessarily* hypocritical. Evil is a mystery,

Thirdly: On account of the *wonderful issues that will result from it*. Results will spring from evil which the originators and agents never designed, nay, which they would dread. The introduction of sin became the occasion of a new and brighter manifestation of God. All the glorious developments of Divine justice, and love, and power, which we have in Christ, owe their existence to evil. Evil has done an immense injury to the universe, but I believe that in the long run of ages it will be found to have been overruled for a greater good. Notice here concerning moral error that—

II.—ITS COURSE IS LAMENTABLE. "*The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottom-*

less pit (is about to come out of the abyss), *and go into perdition.*" What meaneth this? The Roman emperors, especially Nero, is the answer of some. My answer is deeper, broader, more practical; it is moral error, that which originated all that was bad in Rome, in Babylon, aye, and in the world and ages throughout. Moral error is the *beastifying* force in human nature, it makes men beasts everywhere. Its beginning and end are lamentable, it rises from the "*bottomless pit*," from the fathomless abysses of impure lusts, ravenous greed, burning ambition, sensual yearnings, impious irreverences, and blasphemous assumptions, &c. Its end is lamentable. It leads to "*perdition*," to ruin. The course of moral error is like the course of the meteor, which rising from the abysses of the sulphurous cloud flashes across the concave heavens, and then falls into darkness and forgetfulness. "Lust when it conceiveth bringeth forth sin, sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." "The wages of sin is death," the death of everything that

gives value to life, the death of an approving conscience, pure friendships, bright hopes, &c. What a glorious contrast is the course of *moral truth* to this! "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Light is the emblem of intelligence, purity, and blessedness. The march of the good is like the march of the sun, *glorious*. How glorious is the sun as it rises in the morning, tinging the distant hills with beauty, at noon flooding the earth with splendour, in evening fringing the clouds with rich purple, crimson, and gold. *Commanding*. The sun is the ruler of the day, at his appearance the world awakens from its slumbers, the winds and waves obey him, as he moves all nature moves. *Useful*. The sun enlightens the system and maintains harmony throughout every part. He renews the earth, quickens the seeds into life, covers the landscape with beauty, ripens the harvest for man and beast. *Independent*. Troops of black clouds may roll over the earth but they touch not the sun; furious

storms may shake the globe but the sun is beyond their reach. He is always behind the darkest clouds and looks calmly down upon the ocean in fury and the earth in a tempest. *Certain*. The sun is never out of time, he is ever in his place at the right hour. In all this he is the emblem of the good. Concerning moral error notice—

III.—ITS SUPPORTS ARE UNSTABLE. "*And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the (is himself also an) eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*" This "mother of harlots" (the emblem of corrupt Christianity) is here represented as sitting "*on the beast with seven heads and ten horns.*" The seven heads are "*seven mountains.*" What mountains? The seven hills on which Rome was built is the answer of popular expositors. There are "*seven kings.*" Who are these kings, five of whom are gone, one remaining and waiting for another, who are they? One expositor suggests that "the reference is rather to seven great monarchies, five of which, viz., Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and

Macedon, had fallen before the time of St. John. The Pagan empire of the Roman Cæsars then existing would be the sixth, the Papal power might be the seventh, and the last form of Anti-Christ the eighth." I confess my utter inability to give any verbal interpretation agreeable to the dictates of common sense or the conditions of spiritual culture. The *one* idea which it suggests to me and serves to illustrate, is that the *supports of moral evil are unstable*. Moral evil in our world has its supports. Many seem strong as "*seven mountains,*" mighty as "*seven kings,*" and more, but all are shifting and transitory. Many have been and are not, some have risen and have passed away, others in their course have come and will disappear. This has been the history of moral evil in our world. Many of the arguments that have sustained it from time-to-time have appeared as settled and imposing as mountains, as gorgeous and majestic as kings; but "*mountains have fallen and come to nought,*" and even imperial bulwarks have disappeared as visions of

the night. So it has been, so it is, and so it must be to the end. Moral error has no lasting foundation. Its superstructures are not houses on the rocks, but on shifting sands. Whether it appears in the forms of thrones, governments, churches, colleges, markets, it stands nowhere

but on volcanic hills. They may be clad in loveliest verdure, and enriched with the choicest fruit, but fires lie beneath them which will rive them to pieces and engulf in ruin all that have stood and flourished above.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
LONDON.

No. XXXVI.

The Great Moral Campaign.

“THESE SHALL MAKE WAR WITH THE LAMB, AND THE LAMB SHALL OVERCOME THEM : FOR HE IS LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS : AND THEY THAT ARE WITH HIM ARE CALLED, AND CHOSEN, AND FAITHFUL. AND HE SAITH UNTO ME, THE WATERS WHICH THOU SAWEST, WHERE THE WHORE SITTETH, ARE PEOPLES, AND MULTITUDES, AND NATIONS, AND TONGUES. AND THE TEN HORNS WHICH THOU SAWEST UPON THE BEAST, THESE SHALL HATE THE WHORE, AND SHALL MAKE HER DESOLATE AND NAKED, AND SHALL EAT HER FLESH, AND BURN HER WITH FIRE. FOR GOD HATH PUT IN THEIR HEARTS TO FULFIL HIS WILL, AND TO AGREE, AND GIVE THEIR KINGDOM UNTO THE BEAST, UNTIL THE WORDS OF GOD SHALL BE FULFILLED. AND THE WOMAN WHICH THOU SAWEST IS THAT GREAT CITY, WHICH REIGNETH OVER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH.”—*Rev. xvii. 14-18.*

To our mind these verses seem to adumbrate the greatest of all the campaigns this world has ever witnessed or ever will. In every department of sentient being there seems to be an arena of conflict, and physical wars in human life have been rife in every part of the world, from the first

periods to the present hour. But the great *moral campaign* is the most universal, unremitting, and momentous. The words serve to bring to our notice two subjects in relation to this campaign—

I. — THE CONTENDING FORCES. What are these ? Truth and falsehood, selfish-

ness and benevolence, right and wrong, these are the battling powers. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Each of these contending forces have their own leader or general.

First: The one is represented as a "*beast*." The beast is the emblem of the mighty aggregate of wrong in all its elements and operations, wrong in theories and in institutions, wrong in sentiments, ideas, and habits, wrong as imposing as seven mountains, as majestic as kings and empires, wrong sitting as empress over all "nations, and peoples, and tongues." Wrong is the greatest thing in this world at present; it is the mighty Colossus with the "head of gold, breast and arms of silver, his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay."*

Secondly: The other is represented as a "*Lamb*."

"*These shall make war with (shall war against) the Lamb.*" The Lamb is the emblem of innocence, mildness, and purity. In Daniel's vision wrong was a colossal figure and right a little stone. Here wrong is a terrible beast and right a tender Lamb. Here are the two great generals in this mighty campaign. Observe here—

II.—THE MARVELLOUS CONQUEST. Observe—

First: The *Conqueror*. "*The Lamb shall overcome them.*" The Lamb, not the beast, is the conqueror. Power is not to be estimated by size or form. The little stone shivered the image, the Lamb strikes the beast into the dust. The Lamb, though not a bellicose existence, is (1) invested with the highest authority. "*He is Lord of lords, and King of kings.*" The greatest sovereignty that man wields over his fellows is lamb-like rather than lionine. It is not that of physical force and gorgeous form, but of lowliness and silence. The Lamb is (2) followed by a noble army.

* On Daniel's vision—see *Homilist*, vol. x., page 277.

"They that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Who are His followers? Whom does He lead into the battle? *"The called, and chosen, and faithful."* Soldiers in the physical battles of nations are men who have embarked in the campaign, not from disinterested love of their country or admiration for their generals, but from motives sordid and sinister, they have sold themselves to the execrable work. Not so with the armies under the command of the Lamb, who is *"Lord of lords, and King of kings."* They are *"called, and chosen, and faithful."* Love to Him and His grand cause fills and fires their souls. Notice here—

Secondly: The conquered. *"These shall hate the whore,"* &c. (1) The conquered turn with indignation on themselves. The *"beast"* with the *"ten horns,"* all his mighty

armies *"hate the whore,"* the harlot whom they fondled and adored, strip her of her grandeur, devour her, and *"burn her with fire."* Thus it has ever been. Those whom Christ conquers in His love and truth turn in devouring indignation against their old comrades. Thus, Paul turned against the Hebrews, in whom at one time he gloried as a Hebrew of the Hebrews. This wonderful change in them is the result of the Spiritual influences of God. *"He hath (did) put in their hearts to fulfil His will (to do His mind), and to agree (to come to one mind)."* The moral conquest of wrong is ever ascribable to Him who is the Fountain of truth and right. "Now thanks be unto God that always causeth us to triumph," &c.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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These Sketches will be continued in the next issue of the *"Homilist"* under the Editorship of the Author. It is expected that this issue will start in January next, at the price of Sixpence monthly. It is earnestly hoped that this endeavour to bring the work within the reach of all the poorer brethren of all denominations will win the hearty co-operation of all subscribers in the endeavour to win a large and remunerative circulation. Applications should be made at once to R. Dickinson, Farringdon Street, and the serial will be sent at end of each month post free for Sixpence.

Seedlings.

SKETCHES OF DISCOURSES BY REV. CALEB MORRIS,
OF LONDON,

Taken down at time of delivery by one of his hearers.

For a Sketch of this remarkable man and unrivalled preacher see "PULPIT MEMORIALS," page 381, published by Clarke & Co.

No. I.

The Philanthropy of God and the Redemption of Man.

"BUT AFTER THAT THE KINDNESS AND LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US, BY THE WASHING OF REGENERATION, AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST."—*Titus* iii. 4, 5.

Two great cardinal truths are here exhibited—the philanthropy of God, and the redemption of man.

I.—THE PHILANTHROPY OF GOD. This philanthropy is here presented in its various manifestations—"Kindness." In this form it is displayed throughout the universe to all beings. "Mercy." In this form it appears only to the tried and the sorrowful—it is compassion; it has no regard to any "*works of righteousness*," for such works we have never wrought.

II.—THE REDEMPTION OF MAN. The philanthropy of God is not a mere sentiment or emotion, it is a force—it comes down and acts in

man. First: It acts for his salvation. "*He saved us.*" Man's salvation is within; it is from soul-ignorance to knowledge, soul-bondage to freedom, soul-pollution to purity, soul-weakness to power, soul-degradation to honour. Secondly: It saves by regeneration. "*The washing of regeneration.*" It is a moral renewal of all the tendencies of the soul, pointing them to new objects, turning them into new channels. There is no change in the natural faculties, but in their moral direction. When by the rudder the gallant bark is turned from the freezing north to the glowing south, its materials and

cargo remain intact, the only change is in the direction, using the winds and the waves to bear her on to calmer and sunnier shores. Thirdly : It regenerates by a special divine influence. "*Renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" The Divine Spirit was always in the world and always will be; but He came in a special form and fulness on the day of Pentecost. Washing implies (1) *The removal of the abnormal*. Sin no more belongs constitutionally to the soul than the stains of dirt to

the pure fabric; it is something wrongly attached to it—something that disfigures it. Sin is not natural but foreign to the soul. Washing implies (2) *The restoration of the natural*. When the foul linen is thoroughly cleansed it has then its true character. When sin is taken from the soul, the soul appears again in the image of God. How transcendently wonderful is Divine philanthropy,—wonderful in its nature, and wonderful in its workings in the human soul !

No. II.

The High Destiny of the Good.

"THOU SHALT FOLLOW ME AFTERWARDS."—*John* xiii. 36.

In the conversation here reported of Jesus and His disciples they open their hearts fully to Him, and He opens His great soul to them. Three points are touched upon in the conversation,—*His approaching Personal Separation from them,—the Establishment of a more Spiritual Intercourse between them in consequence of this,—and the Assurance that they should be Re-united to Him in the brighter Realm of Being*. It is noteworthy that although Jesus

taught these truths with remarkable simplicity as well as tenderness His disciples understood Him not. Hence their questions about whither He was going. The fact of their not understanding Him is solemnly significant. Does it not imply that much religious ignorance may co-exist with genuine discipleship; that the entrance of Divine truth into the human soul is very slow and gradual; that the greatest impediment to the admission of His truth is popular

religious error? They had not excluded from their minds the idea that Christ was a material Messiah, and realised that *the grand design of the special influence from heaven was so to remove all prejudices from the mind as to admit a ready entrance of the truth.* "Thou shalt not follow Me now." Their thought undoubtedly was that His meaning was going to some other part of the country. But He meant, "I am going to the higher world, you must remain here still for a time, and hereafter you shall rejoin Me." There are here three general truths—

I.—THAT CHRIST PASSED FROM THIS EARTH TO A HIGHER WORLD. That there is a future state of blessedness for true disciples is here implied, and supported abundantly by Biblical statement as well as philosophic considerations. Christ seems to present this wonderful truth to His disciples at different times, in three aspects, First : As a *doctrine*. He appeals to human reason. Thus at the grave of Lazarus He says—"He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" If Christ taught anything clearly, strikingly, and joyously, He taught this, that there is a brighter world, a future destiny, a heaven for all

the good. Another aspect in which Christ seems to present this truth is, Secondly : As a *fact*. The fact is exemplified in His own history, He demonstrated His own resurrection from the dead, and for forty days He tabernacled with His contemporaries after He had broken through the darkness of mortality. Thus He taught His disciples, in His own person, concerning the future, not only merely by His reasoning, but by facts. He exhibits it not merely to their understanding but to their senses. He presents this truth, Thirdly : As an *influence*. He brought it not merely to their senses and their reasons, but by His Spirit to their moral consciousness. His Spirit came, called the fact of the future world to their memory, and its moral meaning to their consciousness. The greatest proof that Christ lives in the future world is that His principles, His temper, and His life live in the beliefs, in the hearts, in the ideas and sentiments of untold thousands of men on this earth, and will in a greater number in the ages to come. He who was buried in one human grave lives in millions of human souls. "Christ liveth in me," said Paul. Observe—

II.—That into this higher world HIS DISCIPLES WILL ENTER

IN DUE TIME. "Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." It is implied, First: That the *fact* of the disciples' departure to Christ is *settled*. "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards." You shall come; nothing shall prevent it. "Where I am there shall ye be also." Your departure may be delayed, but not prevented. Though many years may roll away, you will come; you will not remain in your present world of sin and death for ever. The bright regions whither I am going ye shall enter one day. It is implied Secondly: That the *delay* of the departure of the disciples to Christ *has a reason*. "Thou canst not follow Me now." Why not now? Two good reasons may be suggested (1) Your work is not done *within*. There is a world of work to do in the human soul before it is thoroughly fit for the society of Christ, and for the holy society and scenery of heaven. Another good reason for the delay is (2) Your work is not done *without*. To every man there is given a vineyard to cultivate. There are everywhere, in the circle in which a man lives, errors to be corrected,

wrongs to be put down, ignorance to be dispelled, crimes to be abolished, reformations to be effected, souls to be saved. Every man must finish the work that has been given him to do before he can quit this scene. "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world."

III.—That the entrance of the disciples into this higher world WILL BE THE CONSUMMATION OF THEIR DESIRES. It is an instinct of the soul to desire to be with those we love. The stronger the love, the stronger the desire. The disciples loved Christ and they desired to go with Him,—“Lord why cannot I follow Thee now?” “I will come,” says Christ, “and take you to myself.” Paul said, “I have a desire to depart and be with Christ.” To be with Christ is the heaven of His genuine disciples, and there is no other heaven. “We shall see Him as He is, and be like Him.” He is “the image of the invisible God.” Material nature is *an* image of God, a holy soul is a higher image of God, but Christ is *THE* image of the invisible God, and to be with Him is to be like Him.



Days of the Christian Year.

1 John iv. 19.

(For the First Sunday after Trinity.)

FROM THE EPISTLE.

“WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE
FIRST LOVED US.”

THIS familiar sentence contains sublimest truth; truth that has been the highest vision of the best men that ever have lived, and the noblest motive of the truest heroes of our race. There is here I.—ONE GREAT EXPERIENCE IN WHICH GOD AND GOOD MEN ARE ONE. “He loved,” “we love.” This love is (a) *The chief sign of our Divine parentage*, for in nothing can we so much resemble our Father. (b) *The chief method of our Divine knowledge*, for by nothing else can we so truly know God. (c) *The chief point of our Divine communion*, for it is by love rather than by logic God and man can “reason together.” “He that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.” II.—THE ANTECEDENT EXISTENCE OF GOD’S LOVE. “He first loved.” This is in harmony with (a) *Our true conception of God*. All good is in Him primarily and in His creatures subsequently. (b) *The indications of nature*. On every hand there are tokens of a long-enduring love of God, that in ages far

anterior to our love of Him must have so been preparing this world, and it may be other worlds in the universe, for us, that each one of us has to say to God, “Thou preventest me with the blessings of goodness.” (c) *The revelation recorded in Scripture*. Compassion for the weak, pity for the needy, forgiveness for the sinful in the heart of God led to the gift of His Son long before we loved Him. III.—THE ORIGINATING FORCE OF GOD’S LOVE. “We love Him *because* He first loved us.” (1) His love *should* inspire ours. Response is right; gratitude is obligatory. (2) His love *can* inspire ours. Loving God is but letting God love us.

EDITOR.

Romans viii. 18.

(For Fourth Sunday after Trinity.)

“FOR I RECKON THAT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US.”

THE Bible we are told is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. It is not, therefore, to be regarded and used

merely, or even mainly, as a storehouse of comfort, or as a kind of spiritual narcotic. Still many passages were written to soothe and cheer, our text being one of the most striking.

I.—OUR PRESENT SUFFERING.

No one can go through life without meeting suffering. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards." The Christian is no exception to this rule. This may startle some, for it is a common belief that the Christian religion acts as a sort of philosopher's stone, and changes all life into happiness. The history of Christianity shows us differently. Christ, its Founder, suffered, His apostles suffered, and all through the ages His followers have had to endure suffering like their Lord. The New Testament also contradicts such an idea, for it reminds us that the way is narrow, the door strait, and that if we would become disciples of Christ Jesus we must take up our cross daily and follow Him. Our present sufferings are of two kinds; what we may call ordinary and extraordinary. The ordinary are such as are common to all men, as *e.g.*, sickness, loss of friends, failure of our plans and disappointed hopes. The extraordinary sufferings are those we voluntarily take upon ourselves for the sake of Christ. The

suffering Paul endured in preaching the Gospel is one case in point; the sacrifice of time, money, and inclination many around us make that they may brighten the lives of their fellow-creatures is another.

II.—OUR FUTURE GLORY.

Our present life is one of suffering, our future life one of glory. But what is this glory that awaits us in the next world? We shall know no sorrow, our joy will be full and unending. Sin and all its attendant train of evils will be banished from that place. Our ignorance will give place to perfect knowledge, our guesses to the truth. Moreover, in the next life man will possess a glorified body in which the spirit rules supreme and without the limitations and weaknesses which belong to our present robe of flesh. He will also be restored to his old place in the scale of nature, and receive back again the universal dominion which he lost at the fall. But, best of all, man in that risen life will be one with God; one in aim, thought, character, love; the image of God in which Adam was created will be re-formed in him. Still, after all, these are but glimpses, hints of that future blessedness. They are as the first faint rays of the sun, imperfect suggestions of the glory that shall be revealed.

III.—THE RELATION OUR FUTURE GLORY BEARS TO OUR PRESENT SUFFERING. If we compare the suffering of the present with the glory that awaits us in the future, the only conclusion we can arrive at is that the apostle expresses in our text. If we take all the ills of life, and all the promises of the future, weigh them in the scales of our judgment, we shall find that our present ills are but as dust in the balance. As is a single cloud on a summer's day, or one bad ear of corn in a field, so is the suffering we now bear to the blessedness of the future.

IV.—THE PRACTICAL BEARING OF THIS UPON OUR LIVES. The realisation of our future glory will lighten our load and brighten our path through this life. The student's labours are made easy by the thought of ultimate success, the traveller's difficulties, hardships, and dangers are thought lightly of when he remembers the reward in store for him. In the same manner, if we keep our eyes fixed upon the honours that are laid up for us, we shall be able to bear without murmuring, and even cheerfully, the ills of the present.

BRISTOL.

W. H. SKINNER.

MOTIVE FOR TRUE SOCIAL LIFE HERE.—“The more complete the organisation of the Christian life here, the better preparation will it be for that which is to come. The colonist who has been formed by the discipline of a civilised state is not thereby unfitted for his new country. On the contrary, there is no faculty of his which has been trained on this side the water which he does not carry with him to his home beyond the seas. The training not of the individual only is to be effected here. The societies of this world will, unless man ceases to be man, be reproduced in all except their narrow conditions and unworthy features in the world to come.”—CANON FREEMANTLE.

Breviaries.

SHORT NOTES ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

(No. 21.) Christian Love as a Service.

“USING HOSPITALITY ONE TO ANOTHER WITHOUT MURMURING: ACCORDING AS EACH HATH RECEIVED A GIFT, MINISTERING IT AMONG YOURSELVES, AS GOOD STEWARDS OF THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD; IF ANY MAN SPEAKETH, SPEAKING AS IT WERE ORACLES OF GOD; IF ANY MAN MINISTERETH, MINISTERING AS OF THE STRENGTH WHICH GOD SUPPLIETH: THAT IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, WHOSE IS THE GLORY AND THE DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.”
 1 *Peter* iv. 9-11. (*R.V.*)

HERE the apostle describes Christian Love as a Service. For as the word variously translated minister and deacon denotes a servant, so the word “ministereth” here really conveys the simple thought of service, a thought which veins the beautiful marble of these two verses. This service is I.—UNIVERSAL IN ITS OBLIGATION. “As each hath received a gift.” That includes all, for all are gifted by God with some endowment or other. The man who has received no gift from God would be one not only without possession or influence, but without life; he is a nothing and he is nowhere to be found. We have seen all through the epistle some of Peter’s memories of his Lord’s teaching. Is there not here a recollection of His parable of the Talents. In its light every gifted man is “a steward” (verse 10). The Service of Love is II.—MANIFOLD IN ITS METHOD. All serve, but all serve in different ways. The Service of Love is not a dreary monotone, but the richest music,—it embraces the full diapason of Duty. It is “the manifold grace of God.” Some of the notes are here. “*Using hospitality.*” This specially applicable to those to whom the epistle was first written, *i.e.*, “strangers of the dispersion.” It was, indeed, almost *the earliest form* of Christian charity. Peter finds it in Simon the tanner, Paul in Gaius, &c. It is *incumbent on man now*, in the midst of the yawning social distinctions, and of the ceaseless travel of to-day. Here is an echo of the teaching of the apostle’s Lord, “I was

a stranger and ye took Me in." "*Without murmuring,*" i.e., without grumbling. Three watch-dogs keep the door of the inhospitable man,—Temper, Suspicion, Reproach. "*If any man speaketh,*" Just as the hands put on the table viands for the body, the lips are to spread a banquet for the intellect and the heart. How? "*As it were oracles of God.*" That must mean with reality, with purity, with tenderness. "*If any man ministereth.*" This comprehends every form of service. It is a widening of the other two just mentioned. "*As of the strength which God supplies.*" That implies that the service will be rendered (a) *Humbly* : no pride, for he is a channel only, not a fountain. (b) *Free* ; no stint or grudging when God is the source. The Service of Love is III.—ONE IN PURPOSE. "*That in all things God may be glorified.*" Hospitality, Teaching, Almsgiving, all are to be for the glory of God. "*Through Jesus Christ.*" Had it not been for Jesus Christ that kindness, activity, wisdom, liberality would not have been. He awakened all. He the Head from which the life of love flows. "Whose is the glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen." This not a note of conclusion, but of strong emotion. Reason, Gratitude, Love, all utter their deep amen to the declaration that God through Christ has endless glory and dominion.

EDITOR.

(No. 22.) The Christian's Fiery Trial.

"BELOVED, THINK IT NOT STRANGE CONCERNING THE FIERY TRIAL AMONG YOU, WHICH COMETH UPON YOU TO PROVE YOU, AS THOUGH A STRANGE THING HAPPENED UNTO YOU : BUT INSOMUCH AS YE ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS, REJOICE ; THAT AT THE REVELATION OF HIS GLORY ALSO YE MAY REJOICE WITH EXCEEDING JOY. IF YE ARE REPROACHED FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST, BLESSED ARE YE ; BECAUSE THE SPIRIT OF GLORY AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD RESTETH UPON YOU."—1 *Peter* iv. 12-14. (*R.V.*)

SOME have thought Peter is alluding to the burning of Rome, but both because the conception of suffering generally as *fire* is very common in the Old Testament Scripture, with which Peter shows himself familiar, and also because he is writing to Christians upon whom through all parts of

the Asiatic provinces of Rome the cruelties of Nero's persecution were being in many ways wreaked, we conclude that "the fiery trial" is a wider, and more scathing, and more enduring conflagration than that which destroyed the imperial city. So the lessons here are of wide application. They cover the whole scope of Christian suffering. I.—THE CHRISTIAN MUST NOT RECKON HIS SUFFERINGS AS STRANGE. Tenderly, with the word "beloved," Peter bids Christian sufferers not to feel themselves bewildered as men in a strange country. Do not let suffering shock you. Do not fear as you enter into the cloud. Why not? Because (1) *The sorrows the Christian shares in common with the world generally are not strange.* His religion will not exempt him from bodily pain, business calamities, social bereavement, physical death. Because (2) *The sorrows that Christians endure in persecution because they are Christians are not strange.* Persecution is not to be wondered at. It is (a) An instinct of evil men. (b) In harmony with all history. The flippant dislike the real, the unclean are angry with the pure, the votaries of error are irritated with the teachers of truth, the wicked hate the good,—hence the pains and penalties of persecution are not strange. Because (3) *The sorrows that are the direct result of Christian spirit and character are not strange.* (a) Grief for sin and imperfection. (b) Compassion for the miserable. (c) Self-sacrificing sympathy for the vicious and wretched. No! Trial is not "strange," for First: *It meets the necessities of Christian character.* "It cometh upon you to prove you." Second: *It is in fulfilment with the repeated declarations of God's word.* Third: *It is in harmony with all the biographies of good men.* The device on the Church's shield is the bush that burns and yet is not consumed. II.—THE CHRISTIAN MAY FIND IN HIS SORROWS A CAUSE FOR PROFOUND JOY. To Peter, as well as to his beloved brother Paul, the vast region of sorrow was not unknown or unexplored, they did not feel "strange" in it, as bewildered men in a foreign country. They had descried light on its hill-tops, drank of streams in its deserts, plucked flowers in its solitudes, eaten manna in its wastes. How was this? They were "*partakers of Christ's sufferings.*" Some of our Lord's sorrows are infinite secrets. Some can be known and shared. Such as (1) *Agonising sensitiveness to sin.* His sigh, tear, groan, we may know in our experience. (2) *Sacrificial compassion for sinners.* (3) *Steady self-denying loyalty to duty.* In all these we may, we must as Christians, be partakers of Christ's sufferings. "*At the revelation of His glory.*" These words speak of unspeakable future joy. To rejoice in the revelation of His glory which will be the triumph of pity, of purity, of

the mission to bless others, we must be partakers of His sufferings. Blessed now with reproach for His sake, we shall by growing resemblance to Him and gracious reward from Him, be blessed then. "*The Spirit of glory and of God resteth on you.*" This token of the Divine presence not simply indicates the *continuance* of God with you, but the *satisfaction* of God in you. His Spirit "*resteth*" upon you. The teaching is, First: God is *near* those who are partakers of Christ's sufferings. The Spirit of God is with them. Second: God is near them to *glorify* them, and Himself to *rejoice* in them. The Spirit of *glory resteth*. The music of the Beatitudes is ringing through Peter's soul, and he flings out their consoling, inspiriting tones to all who were, or ever shall be, in "the fiery trial" through which all Christians pass. "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

EDITOR.

(No. 23.) Suffering; Shameful and Glorious.

"FOR LET NONE OF YOU SUFFER AS A MURDERER, OR A THIEF, OR AN EVIL-DOER, OR AS A MEDDLER IN OTHER MEN'S MATTERS: BUT IF A MAN SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED; BUT LET HIM GLORIFY GOD IN THIS NAME. FOR THE TIME IS COME FOR JUDGEMENT TO BEGIN AT THE HOUSE OF GOD: AND IF IT BEGIN FIRST AT US, WHAT SHALL BE THE END OF THEM THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF GOD? AND IF THE RIGHTEOUS IS SCARCELY SAVED, WHERE SHALL THE UNGODLY AND SINNER APPEAR? WHEREFORE LET THEM ALSO THAT SUFFER ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD COMMIT THEIR SOULS IN WELL-DOING UNTO A FAITHFUL CREATOR."—1 *Peter* iv. 15-19. (*R.V.*)

THE apostle is still dwelling on the "Fiery Trial." All trial to the Christian is a fire (*a*) that gives great pain, (*b*) destroys evil, (*c*) purifies the good. Notice I—SUFFERING FOR WRONG-DOING IS CERTAIN AND IS SHAMEFUL. "*Let none of you suffer as a murderer,*" &c. This is strange counsel to Christians. That it is thus given to them (1) *Reminds us of the classes from which the first converts were drawn.* No doubt many were not only from the poorest, but from criminal classes. Hence the apostle's

reminder, after he has described some of the basest of characters, "Such were some of you." (2) *Suggests to us to be on our guard against sins to which, before we became Christians, we were addicted.* The old taint is a peril. Perhaps few now need fear being "murderers" or "malefactors," but many may be on their guard against being "meddlers." "Lay aside the sin that so easily besets." "*Them that obey not the Gospel.*" Here is another class whose sufferings will bring shame. The climax of judgment is for them. Who can tell what their "end" will be? "The house of God" is under His control, and all in it must suffer for their wrong-doing. Those who know the claims of the Gospel, the possibilities it offers, and yet despise it, reject it, "do not obey it," must have even severer suffering than Christians who have blundered into error, or been overborne by evil, for they at least have (a) *Resignation*; (b) *Hope of better life*; (c) *Conscious fellowship with a forgiving God.* II.—SUFFERING FOR RIGHT-DOING MAY BEFAL US BUT WILL BE A SOURCE OF GLORY. This Peter noted in earlier paragraphs and reverts to again. "Suffer as a Christian,"—that is because he is a Christian. The very name was at first one of scorn. And the name of scorn has become a name that glorifies God. So with all the sufferings that the character of those who truly wear that name has ever brought upon them. Are they the sufferings of (a) *poverty*, (b) *unpopularity*, (c) *contempt*, (d) *persecution*. They are sufferings none need be ashamed of, but in which they may, as the noblest of men have done, glorify God. III.—SUFFERING FOR RIGHT-DOING MUST BE ENDURED IN THE RIGHT SPIRIT. The words of the nineteenth verse, the final words about "the fiery trial," are addressed to those who suffer *because* they are Christians. (1) They "*suffer according to the will of God.*" (a) Because He wills it. (b) Along the course of His wise providence. (2) In such sufferings they are to "*commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.*" Here is the obligation of (a) *Trust*. "Commit." Deposit the treasure. (b) *Dutifulness*. "In well-doing." Keep on doing the right. (c) *Trust in and Dutifulness towards God*. "Faithful Creator." He knows, He cares; He will be faithful to His creation, and emphatically to His *trustful* ones. He who gave the soul its existence, and knows its capacities and needs, is its Loving Guardian.

EDITOR.



(No. 24.) True Office-Bearers in the Church.

No. I.

"THE ELDERS THEREFORE AMONG YOU I EXHORT, WHO AM A FELLOW-ELDER, AND A WITNESS OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, WHO AM ALSO A PARTAKER OF THE GLORY THAT SHALL BE REVEALED."—1 *Peter* v. 1. (*R. V.*)

WITH the word "well-doing" in the last sentence of the preceding chapter ringing in our ears, we easily understand why the apostle thus proceeds to exhort men to their duties as office-bearers in the Christian Church. We notice, as here indicated, I.—THE SPIRIT OF OFFICE-BEARERS IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. The word "elders," according to Dean Alford, simply here means leaders in the Church. Subsequently it becomes clear that there were two orders of "elders," viz., bishops and deacons. But at this time these offices had not crystallised thus. *All* were included in the term here used. Their spirit is indicated by Peter's use of the word "fellow-elder" as describing himself, and "exhort" as denoting his relationship to them. There is none of the spirit of an ecclesiastical princeling; no arrogance. But brotherliness permeates all the intercourse. *That* is the supreme spirit of true office-bearers. II.—THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR TRUE SERVICE IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. 1. *Fellowship in sympathy.* "Fellow-elder," burdened with the same cares, stirred with the same inspirations, &c. 2. *Witness-bearing to most solemn realities.* "Witness of the sufferings of Christ." All through this epistle those sufferings are conspicuous as the theme of thought, the constraint of will. The word "witness" implies that Peter felt he was, as regarded these sufferings, (a) *a spectator*, (b) *a testifier*. Ruskin says, "You look at marble which is the delight of the eyes, the wealth of the architecture of all civilised nations, and you find there is not a purple vein or flaming zone that is not the record of their ancient torture in raging fire and stormful convulsion." So is it with the beauty of The Christ, our Foundation Stone, our Corner Stone. 3. *Possession of a sublime inheritance.* "Partakers of the glory," &c. (a) The glory of *character*. (b) That glory at present *partially hidden*. (c) Yet a Christian already *possesses* it. What wealth, what dignity. How unspeakably richer than the mere millionaire, and honourable than the mere hero is the true Christian worker.

EDITOR.

(No. 25.) True Office-Bearers in the Church.

No. II.

“TEND THE FLOCK OF GOD WHICH IS AMONG YOU, EXERCISING THE OVERSIGHT, NOT OF CONSTRAINT, BUT WILLINGLY, ACCORDING UNTO GOD; NOR YET FOR FILTHY LUCRE, BUT OF A READY MIND; NEITHER AS LORDING IT OVER THE CHARGE ALLOTTED TO YOU, BUT MAKING YOURSELVES ENSAMPLES TO THE FLOCK. AND WHEN THE CHIEF SHEPHERD SHALL BE MANIFESTED, YE SHALL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF GLORY THAT FADETH NOT AWAY. LIKEWISE, YE YOUNGER, BE SUBJECT UNTO THE ELDER. YEA, ALL OF YOU GIRD YOURSELVES WITH HUMILITY, TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER: FOR GOD RESISTETH THE PROUD, BUT GIVETH GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”—1 *Peter* v. 2-5. (*R. V.*)

THE apostle's practical exhortation to leaders in the Church about well-doing opens up a view of I.—THEIR DUTY. “Tend,”—a completer word than feed. The word “flock” suggests what tending is needful; *e.g.*, feeding, leading, controlling, protecting. “Exercising the oversight.” Keen and constant care. Of what sort of care he speaks, the word Peter coins to describe Christ, “chief Shepherd,” eloquently tells. (*a*) *Receive instructions from Him.* (*b*) *Imitate Him.* II.—THEIR MOTIVE. (1) This motive is dealt with *negatively*. (*a*) Not constrainedly. A warning against perfunctoriness. (*b*) Not covetously. “Lucre” becomes filthy if it is a motive for spiritual work. (*c*) Not ambitiously. Not “lording it.” (2) This motive is dealt with *positively*. (*a*) *Voluntariness*. “Ready mind.” (*b*) *Sympathy*. “Making yourselves ensamples.” III.—THEIR HOPE. “The crown,”—the symbol of dignity. “Of glory,” not tinselled or tarnished, but unalloyed. “That fadeth not away.” Amaranthine: imperishable. We are advancing to such a coronation if we are true workers for Christ. IV.—THEIR SPIRIT. (1) *Mutual subjection*. “Be subject,” &c. (2) *Perfect humility*. “Gird yourselves with humility”; persistent and constant lowliness of temper. V.—THEIR HELP. “God giveth grace.” Grace,—the favour of God, the greatest yet mightiest inspiration of souls.

EDITOR.

(No. 26.) Counsels for Troubled Christians.

(For the Third Sunday after Trinity; from the Epistle.)

“HUMBLE YOURSELVES THEREFORE UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, THAT HE MAY EXALT YOU IN DUE TIME; CASTING ALL YOUR ANXIETY UPON HIM, BECAUSE HE CARETH FOR YOU. BE SOBER, BE WATCHFUL: YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, AS A ROARING LION, WALKETH ABOUT, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR: WHOM WITHSTAND STEDFAST IN YOUR FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME SUFFERINGS ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN YOUR BRETHREN WHO ARE IN THE WORLD. AND THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO CALLED YOU UNTO HIS ETERNAL GLORY IN CHRIST, AFTER THAT YE HAVE SUFFERED A LITTLE WHILE, SHALL HIMSELF PERFECT, STABLISH, STRENGTHEN YOU. TO HIM BE THE DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.”—1 *Peter* v. 6-11. (*R. V.*)

APPROACHING the end of his letter, the apostle condenses into two or three almost electric sentences some most momentous practical directions for Troubled Christian Men. In these directions we learn I.—THE TRUE SPIRIT FOR CHRISTIAN MEN TO CHERISH IN LIFE’S TRIALS. Here is, First: *Devout humility, and with it freedom from anxiety.* The two are more closely associated than we sometimes imagine. Let us look at them separately, and then in their combination. “*Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.*” (1) *Self-humbling* is true humility. To be crushed by others, or by circumstances, may be only humiliation. (2) *Humbling of self before God* is true humility. Towards God first and chiefly the emotion is to be cherished, the attitude maintained. (3) *Humbling of self before a Personal, Great, and Loving God* is true humility. “*Mighty hand of God.*” Not a force, but a “hand,”—a hand as gentle as mighty. (4) *Humbling of self before such a God will lead to exaltation.* “In due time He will exalt.” “*Casting all your anxiety on Him, for He careth for you.*” “Anxiety,”—perplexing, dividing, cutting thought. “Cast.” By a brave and resolute and simple act of will. “For He careth.” Not “*anxiety*” now, but clear, loving, constant interest. Now we can see how true humility leads to freedom from anxiety. The relationship and attitude of the soul towards God is the key to both. Here is, Secondly: *Sober watchfulness, and with it stern*

conflict. "Be sober," &c. (1) *The need for the watchfulness.* (a) *An enemy.* "Your adversary the devil." (b) *An active enemy.* "Walketh about." (c) *A destructive enemy.* "Whom he may devour." (d) *An enemy who can be resisted.* "Whom withstand." (e) *An enemy whom others have contended with and conquered.* "The same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world." Into that trial and battle and storm all the brotherhood, even the Great Elder Brother, have gone. II.—THE FINAL PURPOSE OF GOD WITH REGARD TO MEN WHO CHERISH SUCH A SPIRIT IN LIFE'S TRIALS. (1) *A destiny that is wonderful.* "God of grace,"—compassion, favour, help. "Called." God compels rivers, oceans in their courses, &c., but calls souls to their high destiny. "Eternal glory in Christ,"—such as is (a) *revealed in Christ*; (b) *shared with Christ*; (c) *inherited through Christ.* (2) *Trial that is transient.* "After ye have suffered a little while." Often it seems long. "Life an age to the miserable, a moment to the happy." But it is a "little while," comparatively to eternity, and absolute in itself. (3) *A character that is complete.* "Perfect," no deficiency or defect. "Stablish." All this to be made permanent. Not goodness like the early cloud and morning dew. "Strengthen." Inspired with force to overcome all hostile influences. (4) *A character that calls for praise to God.* "To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Peter exulted that God reigned, and yearned for Him to have empire that was universal and perpetual, and acknowledged by all with the "amen," not only of all men, but of all the powers in every man.

EDITOR.

The Cure of Care.

"TAKE THEREFORE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW: FOR THE MORROW SHALL TAKE THOUGHT FOR THE THINGS OF ITSELF. SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY IS THE EVIL THEREOF."—*Matthew vi. 34.*

WE need now-a-days this admonition. Perhaps it was never more needed than now. We will not confine our thought to one verse, but take the whole passage which it sums up and enforces. I.—THE WORDS OF JESUS HERE REFER TO A VERY COMMON EVIL They do not forbid ordinary

foresight, but that anxious care which frets away the life and often saps our strength. When we think anxiously of the morrow we think falsely, for we cannot tell what it will bring, and our brains always magnify our dangers and minimize our hopes. If we are not to boast of to-morrow because we know not what a day may bring forth, we are not to trouble about it for the same reason. II.—JESUS TRACES THIS EVIL TO ITS TRUE SOURCE. “O ye of *little* faith.” A little knowledge of our own hearts will show us how true this is. Our fears are great because our faith is small. True faith in God is a sure preventive of our cares and anxieties. We have the surest ground for confidence in Him. Think of His words of promise, His faithfulness, truth, &c. III.—WE SEE HERE THE UTTER USELESSNESS OF OUR ANXIETIES. They do not add a cubit to our stature, though they may add lines of care to our faces and make us old before our time. At all events they do not lighten a single burden, or wipe a tear from any eye, or prepare us in the heart to bear the trials of life when they come. Moreover, when the burden is really upon us we may expect God’s help to bear it, but He does not help us to bear anticipated trials. It is the truest wisdom which declares that “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” IV.—WE ARE TAUGHT TO FIND RELIEF FOR OUR CARES BY CONSIDERING HOW GOD PROVIDES FOR HIS MEANER CREATURES. He clothes the flowers with beauty though it lasts but for a day. He feeds the birds of the air, and Christ says that we are “better than the fowls.” Surely if God so clothe the grass He will clothe us. If His care extends to birds it must surely be wide enough to take in all our wants. V.—We see further how CHRIST LIFTS US ABOVE THE THOUGHTS OF ALL OTHER THINGS TO THE PERFECT KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN. “Your heavenly Father knoweth.” What more need we? Our Father! Let us humbly, but boldly, claim this relationship. If we are His sons He will care for us. He knows all. Nothing escapes His eye. Our path is before Him. Our little children leave us to provide for them. They cast their care on us. Cannot we be equally child-like in dealing with our Father in heaven? If we, being evil, know how to provide for our children, how much more does He know how to meet every need of our changeful and varied lives.

CHELTENHAM.

H. WILKINS.

Pulpit Handmaids.

[We insert the following correspondence, feeling sure it will prove of interest to the old readers of the *Homilist*.]

THE PRESENTATION OF £1,200 TO REV. DR. THOMAS, OF STOCKWELL.

DEAR DR. THOMAS,

As one of your oldest living deacons, who joined you almost at the commencement of your ministry at Stockwell, I have the pleasure of delivering to you two Policies, amounting to £1,200. They are from the London Life Association, one of the oldest, wealthiest, and, supposed to be, safest Insurance Institutions in London. All the premiums on them are now fully paid, and their value will continue to accumulate as long as you live.

Though many of those who united in this achievement have quitted this earthly scene and entered, I trust, into a higher state, those who remain will, I am sure, most heartily join with me in expressing their gratitude at the privilege of attending a ministry like yours, and as being identified with a Church where so much useful work has been done, and where such unbroken harmony prevailed from its commencement to its close.

Yours very truly,

STREATHAM, 28th April, 1885.

HENRY WATTS.

MY DEAR Mr. WATTS,

I cannot say that your communication has surprised me, for I knew years ago that the generous effort was in process amongst my loving people; although, indeed, like most of the enterprises at Stockwell, it moved on without noise and parade. You did not, at Stockwell, emblazon your doings in the columns of the so-called religious press, as in these last days has become very common.

I now remember, with deep gratitude, some of the many good works that you did at Stockwell in this quiet way. How you re-built the old conventicle, and turned it into what, at that time, was considered one of the handsomest Nonconformist Chapels in London, capable of seating one thousand people. This you did without the help of any "Chapel Building Society." How you built the Educational Institute on Stockwell Green at a very heavy cost, and refused not only governmental inspection, but governmental funds, and provided for the education of 300 children daily at the expense of about £300 a year for many years. How, so long as I continued a director of the London Missionary Society, you raised £200 a year for that Institution. And how you carried on the affairs of the Chapel by mere quarterly collections. It is true you never guaranteed me an income, for such a guarantee I never sought. I have always considered that the

minister who receives his income in this way becomes the mere servant of the guarantors, and to a great extent ceases to be an *Independent Minister*. Indeed, had this been the case with me, I never could have accomplished what I have—as you know—outside our Church. “Church Meetings,” as they are called, would have restrained me.

Could I, for example, when kindled with indignation against the Crimean War (carried on by a Government of which Mr. Gladstone was a member) have legally banded together ten thousand men, pledged for £240,000, in order to create a daily journal to be guided in all things by the golden rule, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do even so to them”? Or, could I have founded the “Working Man’s Club and Institute Union,” of which now many hundred branches exist, and for which I succeeded in obtaining, as the first president, Lord Brougham, who was followed by Lord Lyttleton and Dean Stanley? Or, could I have effected the erection of the Aberystwith University, the first resolutions to establish which I drew up in my own library, obtained the first £1,000, wrought for it until £20,000 was obtained to secure the magnificent building, and then went from London, with my friend the late Dr. Nicholas, and Mr. Hugh Owen, to its inauguration, when the Lord Lieutenant of the county presided? * Or, could I have founded and conducted the “Homilist” for so many years? All this would have been impossible—as you know—had I been a paid minister of the Church. You know how, from time to time, the smaller saintlets of the sect-order in my congregation were constantly interfering in my public work. I treated them with respect, but ignored their power or right to do so. Whatever good, however, I have been privileged to accomplish, either in the Chapel or out of it, I ascribe to you and such men as you, of which, thank God, there were many hundreds then at Stockwell, who were not only noble enough to allow me full liberty, but generous enough to co-operate with me in all my honest endeavours.

And now at the close of a ministry at the same place for thirty-five years, I know of no better life to choose than that of a thoroughly Independent Minister, whose creed is Christ, and whose grand aim and endeavour is to serve not sects but souls.

I do not regret the evident gradual decay of a *professional* ministry. It ought never to have been regarded as an office. Preaching is the work of every man who has the inspiration and ability, the Christly spirit and idea.

Why my pen, taken up merely to express my deep gratitude to you, and those who wrought with you and me so many years, should have been driven on to this somewhat prosy scrawl I know not.

God bless you and yours!

Ever affectionately yours,

UPPER TULSE HILL, *April 29th.*

DAVID THOMAS.

* Since writing the above a paper is come into my hands with the statement that an M.P., who some years ago I tried to interest in the matter, has left £2,000 to the University.

EDITORIAL.

TO THE READERS OF "THE HOMILIST."

WITH the issue of this number, I, with very mingled feelings, relinquish the Editorship of *The Homilist*.

When, three years ago, I undertook the responsibility of conducting this magazine, it was with much filial love and some, pardonable, filial pride. For I was thus succeeding my beloved Father, Dr. David Thomas, in a post in which he had served a whole generation of ministers of all churches as it is given to few authors and editors to serve men. For some years I had been sub-editor under him, and for many years had contributed, in my humble way, to his serial. But I had always known, from testimonies on every hand as well as from my own experience as a student of literature, that he was *The Homilist*. Many valued pens had, from year to year, been willing, and even eager, to be at his disposal, but the witness from all churches and almost all countries had ever been that his spirit, his method were the soul and the life of the work. Therefore it was not without misgiving that I ventured to undertake the post I am now vacating. My chief reliance, under God, was upon the continuance of my Father's contributions to his old magazine. This has been happily possible. Throughout the six volumes of this Eclectic Series my Father has enriched each successive number with just that massive energy of thought, that rich fertility of suggestiveness which I am assured ever and anon from readers all over the world has ever been the native strength and the characteristic charm of *The Homilist*. Other contributors have, with a kindness I cannot overrate, come to my assistance and have won my lasting gratitude. In casting my glance back over the brief period of my editorship I remember that *The Homilist* under my charge has sought to run on the old lines and under the same catholic skies, freighted not with heavy timber but with seeds and saplings; not with manufactured metal but with virgin ore. Ever its aim has been the storage of spiritual and intellectual force, such a storage of force as might contribute, under God, to the light, and life, and progress of souls.

Such has been my purpose, cherished earnestly if humbly, and pursued amid the kind encouragement of hundreds of readers, and under, as I hope, the blessing of Almighty God.

But, as my first sentence in this editorial note indicated, I am now relinquishing the editorship. The pressure of ministerial and of other and multiform public work has so broken my health and exhausted, for a while at least, my energies, that for nearly six months I have been absent from the church and city of my life-service, as an invalided and almost useless man. Whenever I return it must be to much less pressing toil, and this necessity compels the abandonment of many of the activities of my early manhood, and among them the withdrawal, with no ordinary emotion, from the editorship of this magazine.

There is, I am happy to say, a probability that *The Homilist* will continue, and in a new series make a fresh start in January. My Father will resume the editorship, and in order to meet the very large class of preachers in every communion who express themselves as intensely anxious to possess such a work but who find the present price beyond their means, it will be issued at the *reduced price of Sixpence*. May I urge my readers to do all they can to encourage this effort by sending their own names, and those of any fresh subscribers they may obtain, to R. D. Dickinson, Farringdon Street, London, who will, before the first day of every month, despatch to their residence a copy, post free.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Reviews.

SCIENTIFIC ILLUSTRATIONS AND SYMBOLS. London : R. D. Dickinson.

We have been favoured with advance sheets of this work which Mr. Dickenson has in the press, and will shortly issue. It will be most useful to ministers and speakers. Anecdotes have, in some cases, become somewhat threadbare as illustrations of moral truth; and the present work proceeds upon the idea that reliable scientific facts are now occasionally preferable. Accordingly, the author has collected a very striking assemblage of interesting and reliable scientific facts, and arranged them in alphabetical form, so as to be available for immediate use by men who require a suggestive topic, a forcible analogy, a cogent symbol, or a telling illustration. The author says:—Nature herself is a parable. Every pond and every star has its distinctive lesson ready for the man who will learn it." The book (which is convenient in size) is one of immense research, much observation, and marked originality. It is evidently thoroughly reliable, because the author gives a list of authorities for the various wonderful facts which he relates. It is capital reading and is packed full of information, thoughts, suggestions, hints, reflections, and epigrams. Every reader of ours who obtains it will do himself an unusual service.

THE WORLD OF CANT. London : Walter Scott. Thirtieth Edition.

When this book first appeared we, without giving our adherence to all its contents, admitted that it was a "remarkable book." It appears, from the notices of the press, that some score of leading literary authorities have subsequently used precisely those same words to characterise it. It is evident, too, that our forecast as to its certainty to have a large circulation has been verified. For, in the *shilling* form now before us, it is evident that it has made *thirty thousand* appearances.

WEAPONS OF THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE. Sermons by the late REV. W. THORNTON, M.A. With Preface by REV. B. F. SMITH, M.A.

THE UNIQUE GRANDEUR OF THE BIBLE. By REV. W. ANDERSON, M.A. London : Hatchards and Co., Piccadilly.

The work entitled, "*Weapons of Christian Warfare*," contains thirty-five sermons on such subjects as—"The Armour of Light—David and

Solomon—Elders of the Church—The Talents—The Children whom God hath Given—The Brook in the Way—The Branch of the Lord God's Covenant—Manifestation—Marriage at Cana—God's Word—Going Out and Coming In—Abraham's Loneliness—Nehemiah—Conversion—Weapons of our Warfare—Gentleness—Temperance—Elkanah and the Passover—The Centurion before the Cross—Prophecy of Christ—In my Flesh see God—The Rending of the Veil," &c., &c. Although these discourses do not flash with genius, or beat with eloquence, they are worth reading. They abound with good thoughts, garbed in untawdry costume.

"*The Unique Grandeur of the Bible.*"—The writings of such able men as Max Müller have helped to produce what some have designated "The Science of Comparative Religion." Modern literature has put Biblical students in possession of the sacred books of India, Egypt, and China, and the sacred book of England, the Bible, is brought in comparison with the contents of those works. The result of the comparison has been useful in many ways, it serves to strengthen rather than weaken belief in the essential elements of Biblical truth, and to expand and liberalise the minds of Biblical expositors. This volume of sermons goes to show that notwithstanding the great agreement in many fundamental respects between the contents of the old religious books of the East and our sacred book, the Bible has a unique grandeur.

EXPOSITORY SERMONS AND OUTLINES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

This volume contains short sermons by different men, some justly distinguished by their genius and scholarship, and others by some things that manly honesty cannot commend. It seems to us very incongruous to print in the same volume contributions by Joseph Parker with those of Stopford Brooke, a man of the highest order of mind, extensive scholarship, rich reading, and sympathies healthy as the vernal breeze, and broad as humanity, with a conscience withal ready evermore to sacrifice worldly honours and emoluments for the sake of the truth and the right. Why some of the discourses have the initials of their authors and others not, we cannot divine. We presume that all are re-publications. On the whole, the book will be acceptable to many sermon readers.

THE EXPOSITOR. Vol. VIII. Edited by Rev. SAMUEL COX, D.D.
London : Hodder & Stoughton.

We deeply regret to learn from the Preface that Dr. Cox—who has made the *Expositor* what it is—has been compelled to retire from the editorship, on account of the views of the proprietors of the magazine, who are, we understand, in sympathy with the Plymouth Brethren, and “Moody and Sankey” religious opinions and methods of action. It was noble of Dr. Cox to create such a work, and we deem it not less noble of him to retire from connection with a magazine where such pampering sentiments and contemptible crudities are to be henceforth encouraged. We confess that now our interest in the continuance of *The Expositor* for the future is gone. It is a sufficient recommendation of this volume to say that it is in all respects equal to its predecessors, and, in some respects, superior.

THE NATIONAL TEMPERANCE LEAGUE'S ANNUAL FOR 1885. Edited by
ROBERT RAE. London : Temperance Publication Depot, 337, Strand.

This is the fifth yearly issue of the “National Temperance Annual.” It contains the latest available information from official sources concerning the extent and results of our national drinking habits, with a comprehensive account of the progress of temperance amongst all classes of society. This volume is enriched by the portraits of Samuel Bowley and Joseph Livesey. A sketch of their lives is attached. They were truly noble men and philanthropists of the right order. Most heartily do we rejoice in the progress of the Temperance Movement, and in the admirable way in which Mr. Rae does his work, both as editor and secretary.

INSPIRATION A CLERICAL SYMPOSIUM.

MOMENTS ON THE MOUNT. By Rev. GEORGE MATHESON, M.A., D.D.

KNOCKING. By J. R. MACDUFF, D.D. London : Nisbet & Son, Berners
Street, Oxford Street.

These three volumes are issued from the same publishing house, and accord with the well-known theological character and catholic spirit of that establishment. The first book, “INSPIRATION,” contains a reproduction of articles that have appeared, from time to time, in the “Homiletic Magazine.” The second, entitled “MOMENTS ON THE MOUNT,” contains a series of meditations, and has one hundred short articles full of the spirit of thoughtfulness and devotion. Dr. Macduff's little volume, entitled “KNOCKING,” is a gem.

THE PREACHER'S COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS; containing Suggestive Readings: being Comments on each Chapter, Didactic and Experimental. Homiletics; consisting of three hundred and fifty Breviates and Outlines on Sections, Topics, or Verses of each chapter. Illustrations: furnishing apt incident or quotation on the Homiletic Themes. By the REV. W. HARVEY JELLIE, and REV. FREDERICK W. BROWN. London: Richard D. Dickinson, 89, Farringdon Street.

On receiving this book, as our Reviewer's Table was already crowded, we gave it into the hands of a thoughtful young minister, and asked him for his judgment. "What a splendid storehouse of suggestion," he said, after some hours of careful perusal. And our own subsequent acquaintance with the volume would not lead us to contradict him. The title-page, as we have quoted it, gives the reader a very true idea of what he may expect to find. But in addition to the three divisions it indicates, we must call attention to the several valuable and full Indices,—the Topical Index, the Analytical Index, and the List of Illustrations and Quotations which in a work of reference, such as this is, are of exceeding importance. The Preface aptly and truly says of the book that "in its Readings, Homilies, and Outlines it seeks throughout to be suggestive and didactic, searching amid Hebrew ordinances for universal obligations and Gospel teachings in the sacrifices and rites of the wilderness." While both the authors have done their work well, "*Homilist*" readers will especially rejoice to find that the fresh, vigorous, and lucid pen of one of them, the Rev. F. W. Brown, who has so long been a welcome writer in our pages, has contributed, perhaps, the most considerable, and certainly the most suggestive of the Homiletics of this book.

GATHERINGS FROM NOTES OF DISCOURSES. By the late THOMAS T. LYNCH. (1852-1871). By A. W., London.

Whatever echoes to thoughtful men the teachings of such a man as Thomas Lynch, must be of no small value. For whilst the Babel-voices that drowned his, as far as the common ear was concerned, are already happily forgotten, "the still small voice" that spoke by his lips has divinest messages of stimulus, and comfort, and guidance to utter to us. To those who cared to meet with a teacher and not simply with a talker, Mr. Lynch was welcome whilst he lived, and to such now "he being dead, yet speaketh."



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